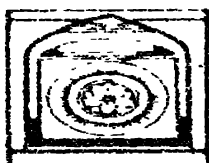


# THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ



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VOLUMES: 38 & 39

(AUTHORISED REPRINT)

# THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

TRANSLATED AND INTERPRETED  
BY

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in Yale University*

VOL. 1  
TEXT AND TRANSLATION

VOL. 2  
INTERPRETATION AND ARNOLD'S TRANSLATION



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**TO THE MEMORY OF  
MAURICE BLOOMFIELD**



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## PREFACE

THIS book is the precipitate of many years of occupation with "India's favorite Bible," as I called the Bhagavad Gītā in my little "interpretation" of 1925. It still seems a good name for it. For, to quote the same source, "it has permeated the collective religious consciousness of the people, from one end of India to the other," so that "not to know it means among them almost what it would mean for an English-speaking person not to know the Bible." It is a prime source of inspiration for many of the political and intellectual leaders of the Indian people, typified by Mahatma Gandhi, who is even more a cultural nationalist than a political one. Becoming known in Europe and America little more than a century ago, it quickly won the interest and admiration of such leaders of thought as Von Humboldt in Germany and Emerson in America. Some philosophical and religious groups in this country today regard the Gītā almost as highly as the Hindus do.

There is a widening circle of intelligent westerners who are losing their occidental insularity and coming to realize that India, like some other eastern countries (China, for instance), has created great works of civilization, of arts and letters and thought, in practically every field of human culture. Any educated man and woman must know at least that such things exist; that civilization does not stop at Suez; that there is a great Indian literature — art — philosophy — music, and so on. And some are learning that it is really not hard to get directly acquainted with some of the more accessible products of Indian literature and art; and that the experience is enjoyable and profitable.

I am firmly convinced that no one can know — in any worth-while sense — any of India's cultural products without learning some Sanskrit. But that is not so serious a hurdle as is often supposed. Even if one lacks the linguist's interest in language as such (and to the linguist Sanskrit is, for various reasons, one of the most interesting of languages), anyone who has a reasonable knack for languages can learn in one year to read the simpler styles of Sanskrit literature with appreciation and enjoyment, though not without some help from a dictionary.

This will take some work, of course. Learning anything is rarely a wholly painless process. But interest rises, and difficulties seem less serious, when the beginner is introduced fairly soon to a piece of literature which impresses him as worth his attention for its own sake, and which is yet not so hard as to discourage him.

The Bhagavad Gītā seems to me to satisfy these requirements better than any other Sanskrit text I know. For the most part it is simple and easy. After a student in his first or second year of Sanskrit has been helped through three or four chapters, and has got used to the style and subject-

matter, he can soon pick up a momentum which will, if necessary, carry him through the rest without a teacher's guidance, and with a minimal use of the dictionary. At the same time he will be making the acquaintance of one of the great religious books of the world, the most important and influential Bible of India. It ought to be possible for him, as he reads, to see why this is so. He need not become a convert; but the simple grandeur, the human dignity of the best parts of the Gītā should make it easy to understand its appeal to the men of India — an appeal which has been for two thousand years, and still is, unsurpassed in power. There are less attractive parts; but what Bible has not its passages which votaries are secretly tempted to wish were not there?

I trust that my book will help those who may want to use the Gītā as an aid to fluency in the Sanskrit language and an introduction to Hindu religion at the same time. The first volume contains the text,<sup>1</sup> and a rather close English translation, on opposite pages. Both are divided into lines so that a single line of print is devoted to a single quarter-stanza of the text (usually only eight syllables in the Sanskrit, and never more than eleven or twelve). This is, I believe, a method never before tried with either text or translation of the Gītā. It was suggested by the late Charles Rockwell Lanman, who had a genius for clarity and simplicity of arrangement. It is hoped that by confronting each quarter-stanza of the text with its translation on the corresponding line opposite, we have made it easy for a beginner to learn to analyze the text correctly, and after a short time almost to dispense with laborious reference to grammars and dictionaries. While the translation is fairly literal, I hope it is not un-English, nor yet wholly unfaithful to the style and spirit of the original. No attempt has been made to keep to verbal identity between this translation and the English versions of stanzas or passages in my "interpretation" in Volume Two, which are freer, though the general sense is, of course, always the same. Occasional uncertainties or difficulties of interpretation are treated in the Notes to the Translation, which are placed at the back of Volume One. In them I have recorded interpretative differences of opinion which seemed to me important, from some of my predecessors, particularly the two most celebrated Hindu commentators, Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja, and six of the leading modern translators: the Hindu Telang, the Germans Garbe and Deussen, the Frenchman Senart, and the Britons Barnett and Hill (see my Notes on Bibliography and Exegesis, below).

The second volume contains a careful revision of my "interpretation," mentioned above (*The Bhagavad Gītā or Song of the Blessed One*, Chicago,

<sup>1</sup> My original intention to use the *devanāgarī* alphabet has been frustrated by practical difficulties due to war-time conditions. It is hoped that after the war it may be possible to republish the volume containing the text, using that Indian alphabet.

Open Court, 1925). Some errors have been eliminated, and a somewhat different turn has been given to the treatment of some subjects, notably in the introductory chapters. In general, however, my views have not materially changed; my account of the main thread of the Gītā's thought and of its historic setting remains essentially the same.

Volume Two also includes a reprint of Sir Edwin Arnold's free poetical rendering of the Gītā, the excellence of which for its purpose was emphasized on page 3 of my interpretation (page 4 of Volume Two of this work); this passage at the same time makes clear the reason for its inclusion here.<sup>2</sup>

There are many commentaries, translations, and interpretations of the Gītā other than those listed. So many, indeed, that some may ask, why publish another? One partial justification may be found in the pedagogical aims of this book, mentioned above. But I shall not deny that I hope scholars and advanced students will also find it useful.

For, paradoxical as it may appear, despite the seeming simplicity of most of the Gītā's language, there are many details that have been differently interpreted. And less surprising, perhaps, is the fact that general estimates of its fundamental philosophy have varied widely, from the times of the ancient Hindu commentators to the present day. Like many another religious book, it is taken to prove almost anything. Perhaps there will be something subjective, inevitably, in any interpretation of such a work. Perhaps any one reads into it something of himself. I can only say, on this point, that I have tried my best to be objective: to present what the author seems to have meant, whether I liked it or not.

I do not know how many times I have read the entire Gītā; thirty or forty times at least. More important is the fact that I have worked over most of it minutely with students (any teacher knows what that means) at least fifteen to twenty times, trying to extract the meaning of every particle. The result contains not a little that differs from any previous interpretation, in small things and great. I am not so presumptuous as to claim finality for any of it. But I feel that I have now reached the saturation point, as far as this text is concerned. It is unlikely that "this person" can ever progress much farther towards the understanding of it. Let this stand, then, simply as a record of the best that *one* western Sanskritist could do with the Gītā, after half a lifetime of the most earnest effort. If it is still very imperfect, that fact in itself will be significant. And even in that case, a few things here and there may commend themselves to posterity, and so contribute to the ultimate goal, the final interpretation which will doubtless never be written.

<sup>2</sup> It is reprinted from *The Song Celestial or Bhagavad-Gītā* . . . by Edwin Arnold, M.A. (Boston, Roberts Bros., 1896). The erratic and inconsistent spelling of proper names and other Sanskrit words, and the original footnotes, have been retained, except that a very few spellings which seem certainly due to either misprints or unintentional slips have been corrected.

## NOTES ON THE BIBLIOGRAPHY AND EXEGESIS OF THE GĪTĀ

THE bibliography of the Gītā in modern times is almost endless. It has been translated into probably all important modern languages, and into some of them many times. I shall mention here only six translations — three English, two German, and one French — which seem to me important from the scholarly standpoint, and which I have constantly consulted in my interpretation of the text. The translation of Arnold belongs in quite a different category; it has no value for scholars as such. The six translations are:

- K. T. Telang, *The Bhagavadgītā*. Sacred Books of the East, Vol. 8. Oxford, 1882; 2d ed. 1908. References here are to the first edition.  
Richard Garbe, *Die Bhagavadgītā*. Leipzig, 1905; 2d ed. 1921. References are to the first edition.  
L. D. Barnett, *The Bhagavadgītā*. London, 1905.  
Paul Deussen, "in Gemeinschaft mit Dr. Otto Strauss," *Vier philosophische Texte des Mahābhāratam*. Leipzig, 1906.  
Émile Senart, *La Bhagavadgītā*. Paris, 1922.  
W. Douglas P. Hill, *The Bhagavadgītā*. Oxford and London, 1928.

Rarely are other translations or interpretations referred to in this work. But I have used extensively, especially on doubtful or disputed interpretations, the two best-known Hindu commentaries in Sanskrit: namely those by Śaṅkara (abbreviated Ś) and Rāmānuja (R). While they have the defects of all ancient Hindu commentators, they still have considerable value for the judicious student. For both I have used the excellent editions in the Ānandāśrama Sanskrit Series.

Garbe's book contains not only a careful and excellent scholarly translation, but an introduction in which the translator undertakes an analysis and interpretation of the text which is profoundly different from mine, and which I criticized in the Appendix to my interpretation of 1925. According to Garbe, the text is a composite work. He believed that the original kernel was a "Sāṃkhya" treatise (using the term Sāṃkhya as denoting a dualistic philosophical system like that known in later India under this name), which was later worked over and expanded by an adherent of the (later) Vedānta philosophy. He thought he could detect and eliminate these later Vedānta accretions; and he printed them in a type of smaller size in his translation. His theory is now generally abandoned; I doubt if any one now holds to it,<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The late Professor Winternitz, who was the greatest authority on the history of Indian literature, was one of those who once accepted Garbe's theory; but later, in the



and I shall not burden this book with a repetition of the arguments against it. It should, however, be emphasized that Garbe's theory of the composition of the poem does not detract at all from the value of his penetrating philological interpretation of the individual stanzas.

My own interpretation tacitly assumes the unity of the Gītā. There seems to me to be no definite reason for any other assumption. It is certain, at any rate, that for many centuries the Gītā has been handed down as a unit, in practically the form in which it now exists. The sanctity which it acquired in the eyes of the Hindus has protected it to an extraordinary degree from changes and from textual corruptions. Important variant readings in the very numerous manuscripts of the vulgate version are virtually non-existent,<sup>2</sup> and no far-reaching divergences occur in them.

In the Appendix to my former book (p. 99) I stated that "there is absolutely no documentary evidence that any other form of the Gītā than that which we have was ever known in India." This statement was true at the time, but must now undergo a slight modification. Since it was written, Professor F. Otto Schrader has discovered a Kashmirian version of the Gītā, which can be traced for nearly a thousand years, and which shows a rather considerable number of minor divergences from the vulgate text, and a very few additions and omissions of entire stanzas. (See his monograph, *The Kashmir Recension of the Bhagavadgītā*, Stuttgart, 1930.) In Professor Schrader's opinion, some of these differences are important; he thinks that in some cases they are older and more original than the readings of the vulgate. In this I differ with him, for reasons which I have set forth in my review of his work, *JAOS.* 52.68-75. I believe that the variant readings of the Kashmirian text are without exception late and secondary, and have no bearing on the determination of the oldest form of the Gītā. Even if I were wrong, however, the question would have little importance for the present work; for the differences are relatively very slight, and rarely affect the essential meaning of even single stanzas, never of the work as a whole.

I would not, however, be understood as asserting that there are no interpolations or secondary accretions in the Gītā. Before it acquired its present odor of sanctity, which has kept it for so many centuries substantially free from changes, it must have lived thru a human, undeified period,

English version of his *History of Indian Literature* (Vol. 1, Calcutta, 1927, p. 436), he abandoned it, tho he still was more inclined to dissect the Gītā than I am. A pupil of Garbe's, the late Rudolf Otto, has more recently carried dissection of the Gītā to a far greater extreme. I consider his work negligible; see my review in *The Review of Religion* (New York), 4.447 ff. (May, 1940).

<sup>2</sup> I believe that this statement will remain essentially true even after the appearance of the first critical edition of Book Six of the Mahābhārata (which includes the Gītā), now being prepared by Professor S. K. Belvalkar for the Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute of Poona.

so to speak; and it is entirely possible that during that period some additions may have been made to it, or other changes introduced. I suppose that every careful student of the Gītā is likely to develop suspicions about occasional verses or passages. But the grounds for such suspicions must in the nature of things, be subjective and tenuous. In no case can they be regarded as approximating scientific demonstration. And, in particular, the fact that a given verse or passage is logically inconsistent with other passages in the Gītā constitutes, in my opinion, absolutely no reason for suspecting that it is unoriginal. If my book does not show that, it will have failed indeed.

## PRONUNCIATION OF SANSKRIT WORDS

It is customary in general to accent the penult of Sanskrit words when the penult is long, otherwise the antepenult (as in Latin). A syllable is long (as in Greek and Latin) if it contains a long vowel or diphthong, or if its vowel is followed by more than one consonant. But note:

(1) The vowels *e* and *o* are (originally diphthongs and so are) *always long* (although no macron is printed over them); and

(2) The letter *h*, when it follows another consonant, in general does not count as a consonant in determining the length of a syllable. Thus, e.g., *th* is one consonant, not two; and if a short vowel is followed by this and no other consonant, the syllable is short.

Most vowels are pronounced substantially as in German or Italian. The following are their approximate English equivalents.

ā = *a* in father

a (short) = the same sound shortened (or, alternatively, almost like *u* in but; so the Hindus pronounce it)

e (always long) = *ay* in say

ī = *i* in machine

i (short) = *i* in pin

o (always long) = *o* in go

ū = *u* in rule

u (short) = *u* in full

ṛ (a vowel!) = *er* in river (or, alternatively, like *ri* in river; so most Hindus pronounce it)

### DIPHTHONGS

ai = *ai* in aisle

au = *ou* in loud

The consonants are pronounced essentially as in English, with the following exceptions:

c = *ch* in church

g is always 'hard' as in get

ṣ and ś may both be pronounced like *sh* in shun. Or more exactly, ś may be pronounced like the "soft" *s* of Russian; or alternatively like *ch* in German *ich*.

Furthermore, note that *h* after another consonant is to be pronounced as an aspiration of the preceding consonant. Thus *bh* is pronounced in a way approaching the sound of *bh* in abhor; *th* (not as in English this or thin, but) in a way approaching *th* in anthill. Note also that *j* is pronounced as in English.



# **VOLUME ONE**



**BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ**  
**TEXT AND TRANSLATION**

# THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

## A TRANSLITERATION OF THE SANSKRIT TEXT

### I

dhṛtarāṣṭra uvāca

1. dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre  
samavetā yuyutsavaḥ  
māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāś ca 'va  
kim akurvata saṁjaya  
saṁjaya uvāca
2. drṣṭvā tu pāṇḍavānīkaṁ  
vyūḍhaṁ duryodhanas tadā  
ācāryam upasaṁgamyā  
rājā vacanam abravīt
3. paśyai 'tāṁ pāṇḍuputrāṇāṁ  
ācārya mahatīm camūṁ  
vyūḍhāṁ drupadaputreṇa  
tava śiṣyeṇa dhīmatā
4. atra śūrā maheṣvāsā  
bhīmārjūnasamā yudhi  
yuyudhāno virāṭaś ca  
drupadaś ca mahārathāḥ
5. dhṛṣṭaketuś cekitānaḥ  
kāśirājaś ca vīryavān  
puruḥjit kuntibhojaś ca  
śaibyaś ca narapuṁgavaḥ
6. yudhāmanyuś ca vikrānta  
uttamaujāś ca vīryavān  
saubhadro draupadeyāś ca  
sarva eva mahārathāḥ
7. asmākaṁ tu viśiṣṭā ye  
tān nibodha dvijottama  
nāyakā mama sainyasya  
saṁjñārthaṁ tān bravāmi te



# THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

## TRANSLATION

### CHAPTER I

Dhṛtarāṣṭra said:

1. In the Field of Right, the Kuru-field,  
Assembled ready to fight,  
My men and the sons of Pāṇḍu as well,  
What did they do, Saṁjaya?

Saṁjaya said:

2. Seeing however the host of the sons of Pāṇḍu  
Arrayed, Duryodhana then  
Approached the Teacher (Droṇa),  
And spoke a word, the prince:
3. Behold of Pāṇḍu's sons this  
Great host, O Teacher!  
Arrayed by Drupada's son,  
Thy skillful pupil.
4. Here are heroes, great archers,  
Like unto Bhīma and Arjuna in battle,  
Yuyudhāna, and Virāṭa,  
And Drupada of the great car;
5. Dhṛṣṭaketu, Cekitāna,  
And the heroic king of Benares,  
Puruṣit, and Kuntibhoja,  
And the Śibi-king, bull of men;
6. Yudhāmanyu the valorous,  
And Uttamaujas the heroic,  
The son of Subhadrā, and the sons of Draupadī,  
All, aye all, men of great cars.
7. But of our men, who are the most distinguished  
Learn from me, best of brahmans, —  
Who are the leaders of my host;  
To name them, I declare them to thee.

8. bhavān bhiṣmaś ca karnaś ca  
krpaś ca samitiṃjayaḥ  
aśvatthāmā vikaṇaś ca  
saumadattis tathai 'va ca
9. anye ca bahavaḥ śūrā  
madarthe tyaktajivitāḥ  
nānāśastrapraharanāḥ  
sarve yuddhaviśāradaḥ
10. aparyāptaṃ tad asmākaṃ  
balaṃ bhiṣmābhirakṣitam  
paryāptaṃ tv idam eteṣāṃ  
balaṃ bhīmābhirakṣitam
11. ayaneṣu ca sarveṣu  
yathābhāgam avasthitāḥ  
bhiṣmam evā 'bhirakṣantu  
bhavantaḥ sarva eva hi
12. tasya saṃjanayan harṣaṃ  
kuruvṛddhaḥ pitāmahaḥ  
simhanādaṃ vinadyo 'ccaiḥ  
śaṅkhaṃ dadhmau pratāpavān
13. tataḥ śaṅkhāś ca bheryaś ca  
paṇavānakagomukhāḥ  
sahasai 'vā 'bhyahanyanta  
sa śabdas tumulo 'bhavat
14. tataḥ śvetair hayair yukte  
mahati syandane sthitau  
mādhavaḥ pāṇḍavaś cai 'va  
divyau śaṅkhau pradadhmatuḥ
15. pāñcājanyaṃ hr̥ṣīkeśo  
devadattaṃ dhanamjayaḥ  
paṇḍraṃ dadhmau mahāśaṅkhaṃ  
bhīmakarmā vṛkodaraḥ
16. anantavijayaṃ rājā  
kuntīputro yudhiṣṭhiraḥ  
nakulaḥ sahadevaś ca  
sughoṣamañipuṣpakau

8. Thy good self, and Bhīṣma, and Karna,  
And battle-winning Kṛpa,  
Aśvatthāman, and Vikarna,  
And the son of Somadatta too;
9. And many other heroes,  
Giving up life for my sake;  
With various weapons and arms,  
All skilled in conflict.
10. (Altho) insufficient (in number) this our  
Host is protected by (the wise) Bhīṣma;  
On the other hand, (while) sufficient, this their  
Host is protected by (the unskilled) Bhīma.<sup>1</sup>
11. And (so) in all movements,  
Stationed in your several places,  
Guard Bhīṣma above all,  
Each and every one of you.
12. Producing joy in his heart,  
The aged grandsire of the Kurus  
Roared a lion's roar on high,  
And blew his conch-shell, full of valor.
13. Then conch-shells and drums,  
Kettle-drums, cymbals, and trumpets,  
All at once were sounded;  
The sound was tremendous.
14. Then on the white-horse-yoked  
Mighty car standing,  
Mādhava (Kṛṣṇa) and the son of Pāṇḍu (Arjuna)  
Blew their wondrous conch-shells:
15. Hṛṣikeśa (Kṛṣṇa) blew Pāñcajanya,  
Dhananjaya (Arjuna) blew Devadatta,  
The great shell Pauṇḍra blew  
Wolf-belly (Bhīma) of terrible deeds.
16. (The shell) Anantavijaya (blew) the king  
Yudhiṣṭhira, Kuntī's son;  
Nakula and Sahadeva  
(Blew) Sughoṣa and Manipuṣpaka.

17. kāsyaś ca parameṣvāsaḥ  
śikhaṇḍī ca mahārathaḥ  
dhr̥ṣṭadyumno virāṭaś ca  
sātyakiś cā 'parājitaḥ
18. drupado draupadeyaś ca  
sarvaśaḥ pṛthivīpate  
saubhadraś ca mahābāhuḥ  
śaṅkhān dadhmuḥ pṛthak-pṛthak
19. sa ghoṣo dhārtarāṣṭrāṇāṃ  
hṛdayāni vyadārayat  
nabhaś ca pṛthivīm cai 'va  
tumulo vyanunādayan
20. atha vyavasthitān dṛṣṭvā  
dhārtarāṣṭrān kapidhvajaḥ  
pravṛtte śastrasampāte  
dhanur udyamya pāṇḍavaḥ
21. hr̥ṣīkeśaṃ tadā vākyam  
idam āha mahīpate  
senayor ubhayor madhye  
rathaṃ sthāpaya me 'cyuta
22. yāvad etān nirīkṣe 'haṃ  
yoddhukāmān avasthitān  
kair mayā saha yoddhavyam  
asmin raṇasamudyame
23. yotsyamānān avekṣe 'haṃ  
ya ete 'tra samāgatāḥ  
dhārtarāṣṭrasya durbuddher  
yuddhe priyacikīrṣavaḥ
24. evaṃ ukto hr̥ṣīkeśo  
guḍākeśena bhārata  
senayor ubhayor madhye  
sthāpayitvā rathottamam
25. bhīṣmadroṇapramukhataḥ  
sarveṣāṃ ca mahīkṣitām  
uvāca pārtha paśyai 'tān  
samavetān kurūn iti

17. And the king of Benares, supreme archer,  
And Śikhaṇḍin, of the great car,  
And Dhṛṣṭadyumna and Virāṭa,  
And the unconquered Sātyaki,
18. Drupada and the sons of Draupadī,  
All together, O king,  
And the great-armed son of Subhadra,  
Blew their conch-shells severally.
19. That sound Dhṛtarāṣṭra's men's  
Hearts did rend;  
And both sky and earth  
It made to resound, swelling aloft.
20. Then seeing arrayed  
Dhṛtarāṣṭra's sons, the apc-bannered (Arjuna)  
When the clash of arms had already begun,  
Lifted up his bow, the son of Pāṇḍu,
21. And to Hṛṣīkeśa then words  
Like these spoke, O king.  
Between the two armies  
Halt my chariot, O unshaken one,
22. Until I espy these  
That are drawn up eager to fight,  
(And see) with whom I must fight  
In this warlike enterprise.
23. I will see those who are going to fight,  
Who are here assembled,  
For Dhṛtarāṣṭra's ill-minded son  
Eager to do service in battle.
24. Hṛṣīkeśa, thus addressed  
By Guḍākeśa, O son of Bharata,  
Between the two armies  
Halted the excellent car,
25. In front of Bhīṣma and Droṇa  
And all the kings,  
And said: Son of Pṛthā, behold these  
Assembled Kurus!

26. tatrā 'paśyat sthitān pārthaḥ  
pitṛn atha pitāmahān  
ācāryān mātulān bhrātṛn  
putrān pautrān sakhīms tathā
27. śvaśurān suhrdaś cai 'va  
senayor ubhayor api  
tān samikṣya sa kaunteyaḥ  
sarvān bandhūn avasthitān
28. kṛpayā parayā 'viṣṭo  
viśidann idam abravīt  
dr̥ṣṭve 'maṃ svajanam kṛṣṇa  
yuyutsum samupasthitam
29. sīdanti mama gātrāṇi  
mukhaṃ ca pariśuṣyati  
vepathuś ca śarīre me  
romaharṣaś ca jāyate
30. gāṇḍīvaṃ sraṃsate hastāt  
tvak cai 'va paridahyate  
na ca śaknomy avasthātum  
bhramatī 'va ca me manaḥ
31. nimittāni ca paśyāmi  
viparītāni keśava  
na ca śreyo 'nupaśyāmi  
hatvā svajanam āhave
32. na kāṅkṣe vijayaṃ kṛṣṇa  
na ca rājyaṃ sukhāni ca  
kiṃ no rājyena govinda  
kiṃ bhogair jīvitena vā
33. yeṣāṃ arthe kāṅkṣitam no  
rājyaṃ bhogaḥ sukhāni ca  
ta ime 'vasthitā yuddhe  
prāṇāṃs tyaktvā dhanāni ca
34. ācāryāḥ pitarāḥ putrās  
tathai 'va ca pitāmahāḥ  
mātulāḥ śvaśurāḥ pautrāḥ  
śyālāḥ sambandhinas tathā

26. There the son of Pṛthā saw stationed  
Fathers and grandsires,  
Teachers, uncles, brothers,  
Sons, grandsons, and comrades too,
27. Fathers-in-law and friends as well,  
In both the two armies.  
The son of Kuntī, seeing them,  
All his kinsmen arrayed,
28. Filled with utmost compassion,  
Despondent, spoke these words:  
Seeing my own kinsfolk here, Kṛṣṇa,  
That have drawn near eager to fight,
29. My limbs sink down,  
And my mouth becomes parched,  
And there is trembling in my body,  
And my hair stands on end.
30. (The bow) Gāṇḍīva falls from my hand,  
And my skin, too, is burning,  
And I cannot stand still,  
And my mind seems to wander.
31. And I see portents  
That are adverse, Keśava;  
And I foresee no welfare,  
Having slain my kinsfolk in battle.
32. I wish no victory, Kṛṣṇa,  
Nor kingdom nor joys;  
Of what use to us were kingdom, Govinda.  
Of what use enjoyments or life?
33. For whose sake we desire  
Kingdom, enjoyments, and happiness,  
They are drawn up here in battle,  
Giving up life and wealth:
34. Teachers, fathers, sons,  
Grandsires as well,  
Uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons,  
Brothers-in-law, and (other) kinsfolk.

35. etān na hantum icchāmi  
ghnato 'pi madhusūdana  
api trailokyarājyasya  
hetoḥ kiṃ nu mahīkṛte
36. nihatya dhārtarāṣṭrān naḥ  
kā prītiḥ syāj janārdana  
pāpam evā 'śrayed asmān  
hatvai 'tān ātatāyinaḥ
37. tasmān nā 'rhā vyaṃ hantum  
dhārtarāṣṭrān svabāndhavān  
svajānaṃ hi kathāṃ hatvā  
sukhinaḥ syāma mādharma
38. yady apy ete na paśyanti  
lobhopahatacetasāḥ  
kulakṣayakṛtaṃ doṣaṃ  
mitradrohe ca pātakam
39. kathāṃ na jñeyam asmābhiḥ  
pāpād asmān nivartitum  
kulakṣayakṛtaṃ doṣaṃ  
prapaśyadbhir janārdana
40. kulakṣaye praṇaśyanti  
kuladharmāḥ sanātanaḥ  
dharma naṣṭe kulaṃ kṛtsnam  
adharmo 'bhībhavaty uta
41. adharmābhibhavāt kṛṣṇa  
praduśyanti kulastrīyaḥ  
strīṣu duṣṭāsu vārṣṇeya  
jāyate varṇasaṃkaraḥ
42. saṃkaro narakāyai 'va  
kulaghnānāṃ kulasya ca  
patanti pitaro hy eṣāṃ  
luptapiṇḍodakakriyāḥ
43. doṣair etaiḥ kulaghnānāṃ  
varṇasaṃkarakārakaiḥ  
utsādyante jātīdharmāḥ  
kuladharmāś ca śāśvatāḥ



35. Them I do not wish to slay,  
Even tho they slay (me), O slayer of Madhu,  
Even for three-world-rulership's  
Sake; how much less for the sake of the earth!
36. Having slain Dhṛtarāṣṭra's men, to us  
What joy would ensue, Janārdana?  
Evil alone would light upon us,  
Did we slay these (our would-be) murderers.
37. Therefore we should not slay  
Dhṛtarāṣṭra's men, our own kinsfolk.  
For how, having slain our kinsfolk,  
Could we be happy, Mādhava?
38. Even if they do not see,  
Because their intelligence is destroyed by greed,  
The sin caused by destruction of family,  
And the crime involved in injury to a friend,
39. How should we not know enough  
To turn back from this wickedness,  
The sin caused by destruction of family  
Perceiving, O Janārdana?
40. Upon the destruction of the family, perish  
The immemorial holy laws of the family;  
When the laws have perished, the whole family  
Lawlessness overwhelms also.
41. Because of the prevalence of lawlessness, Kṛṣṇa,  
The women of the family are corrupted;  
When the women are corrupted, O Vṛṣṇi-clansman,  
Mixture of caste ensues.
42. Mixture (of caste) leads to naught but hell  
For the destroyers of the family and for the family;  
For their ancestors fall (to hell),  
Because the rites of (giving) food and water are interrupted.
43. By these sins of family-destroyers,  
(Sins) which produce caste-mixture,  
The caste laws are destroyed,  
And the eternal family laws.

44. utsannakuladharmāṇām  
 manuṣyāṇām janārdana  
 narake niyataṁ vāso  
 bhavati 'ty anuśūruma
45. aho bata mahat pāpaṁ  
 kartuṁ vyavasitā vayam  
 yad rājasukhalobhena  
 hantuṁ svajanam udyatāḥ
46. yadi mām apratikāram  
 aśastraṁ śastrapāṇayaḥ  
 dhārtarāṣṭrā raṇe hanyus  
 tan me kṣemataraṁ bhavet
47. evam uktvā 'rjunaḥ saṁkhye  
 rathopastha upāviśat  
 viśrjya saśaraṁ cāpaṁ  
 śokasaṁvignamānasaḥ  
 ity arjunaviśādayogo nāma prathamo 'dhyāyaḥ

44. When the family laws are destroyed,  
Janārdana, then for men  
Dwelling in hell certainly  
Ensues: so we have heard (from the Holy Word).
45. Ah woe! 'Twas a great wickedness  
That we had resolved to commit,  
In that, thru greed for the joys of kingship,  
We undertook to slay our kinsfolk.
46. If me unresisting,  
Weaponless, with weapons in their hands  
Dhṛtarāṣṭra's men should slay in battle,  
That would be a safer course for me.
47. Thus speaking Arjuna in the battle  
Sat down in the box of the car,  
Letting fall his bow and arrows,  
His heart smitten with grief.

Here ends the First Chapter, called Discipline of Arjuna's Despondency.<sup>1</sup>

## II

### saṃjaya uvāca

1. taṃ tathā kṛpayā 'viṣṭam  
aśrupūrnākulekṣaṇam  
viṣṭadantam idaṃ vākyam  
uvāca madhusūdanaḥ

### śrībhagavān uvāca

2. kutas tvā kaśmalam idaṃ  
viṣame samupasthitam  
anāryajuṣṭam asvargyam  
akīrtikaram arjuna

3. klaibyaṃ mā sma gamaḥ pārtha  
nai 'tat tvayy upapadyate  
kṣudraṃ hṛdayadaurbalyaṃ  
tyaktvo 'ttiṣṭha paramtapa

### arjuna uvāca

4. kathaṃ bhīṣmam ahaṃ saṃkhye  
droṇaṃ ca madhusūdana  
iṣubhiḥ pratiyotsyāmi  
pūjārḥav arisūdana

5. gurūn ahatvā hi mahānubhāvān  
śreyo bhoktuṃ bhaikṣyam apī 'ha loke  
hatvā 'rthakāmāṃs tu gurūn ihai 'va  
bhuñjīya bhogān rudhīrapradigdhān

6. na cai 'taḍ vidmaḥ kataran no garīyo  
yad vā jayema yadī vā no jayeyuḥ  
yān eva hatvā na jijīviṣāmas  
te 'vasthitāḥ pramukhe dhārtarāṣṭrāḥ

7. kārpaṇyadoṣopahatasvabhāvaḥ  
prcchāmi tvāṃ dharmasaṃmūḍhacetāḥ  
yac chreyaḥ syān niścitaṃ brūhi tan me  
śiṣyas te 'haṃ śādhi mām tvāṃ prapaṇnam

8. na hi prapaśyāmi mamā 'panudyād  
yac chokam ucchoṣaṇam indriyāṇām  
avāpya bhūmāv asapatnam ṛddham  
rājyaṃ surāṇām apī cā 'dhipatyam

## CHAPTER II

**Sarpjaya said:**

1. To him thus by compassion possessed,  
His eyes tear-filled, blurred,  
Despondent, this word  
Spoke the Slayer of Madhu.

**The Blessed One said:**

2. Whence to thee this faintheartedness  
In peril has come,  
Offensive to the noble, not leading to heaven,  
Inglorious, O Arjuna?
3. Yield not to unmanliness, son of Pṛthā;  
It is not meet for thee.  
Petty weakness of heart  
Rejecting, arise, scorcher of the foe!

**Arjuna said:**

4. How shall I in battle against Bhīṣma,  
And Droṇa, O Slayer of Madhu,  
Fight with arrows,  
Who are both worthy of reverence, Slayer of Enemies?
5. For not slaying my revered elders of great dignity  
'Twere better to eat alms-food, even, in this world;  
But having slain my elders who seek their ends, right in this world  
I should eat food smeared with blood.<sup>1</sup>
6. And we know not which of the two were better for us,  
Whether we should conquer, or they should conquer us;  
What very ones having slain we wish not to live,  
They are arrayed in front of us, Dhṛtarāṣṭra's men.
7. My very being afflicted with the taint of weak compassion,  
I ask Thee, my mind bewildered as to the right:  
Which were better, that tell me definitely;  
I am Thy pupil, teach me that have come to Thee (for instruction).
8. For I see not what would dispel my  
Grief, the witherer of the senses,  
If I attained on earth rivalless, prosperous  
Kingship, and even overlordship of the gods.

sarṁjaya uvāca

9. evam uktvā hr̥ṣīkeśaṁ  
guḍākeśaḥ paramtapaḥ  
na yotsya iti govindam  
uktvā tūṣṇīm babhūva ha
10. tam uvāca hr̥ṣīkeśaḥ  
prahasann iva bhārata  
senayor ubhayor madhye  
viṣḍantam idaṁ vacaḥ  
śrībhagavān uvāca
11. aśocyān anvaśocas tvaṁ  
prajñāvādāṁś ca bhāṣase  
gatāsūn agatāsūṁś ca  
nā 'nuśocanti paṇḍitāḥ
12. na tv evā 'haṁ jātu nā 'saṁ  
na tvaṁ ne 'me janādhipāḥ  
na cai 'va na bhaviṣyāmaḥ  
sarve vayam ataḥ param
13. dehino 'smin yathā dehe  
kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā  
tathā dehāntaraprāptir  
dhīras tatra na muhyati
14. mātrāsparśās tu kaunteya  
śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkhadāḥ  
āgamāpāyino 'nityās  
tāṁś titikṣasva bhārata
15. yaṁ hi na vyathayanty ete  
puruṣaṁ puruṣarṣabha  
samaduḥkhasukhaṁ dhīraṁ  
so 'mṛtatvāya kalpate
16. nā 'sato vidyate bhāvo  
nā 'bhāvo vidyate sataḥ  
ubhayor api dr̥ṣṭo 'ntas tv  
anayos tattvadarśibhiḥ
17. avināśi tu tad viddhi  
yena sarvam idaṁ tatam  
vināśam avyayasyā 'sya  
na kaścit kartum arhati

Samjaya said:

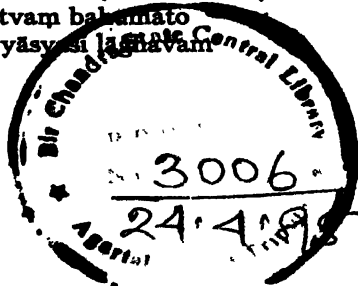
9. Thus speaking to Hṛṣīkeśa,  
Guḍākeśa the Slayer of the Foe  
'I'll not fight!' to Govinda  
Said, and was silent.
10. To him spoke Hṛṣīkeśa,  
With a semblance of a smile, son of Bharata,  
Betwixt the two armies  
As he was despondent, these words:  
  
The Blessed One said:
11. Thou hast mourned those who should not be mourned,  
And (yet) thou speakest words about wisdom!<sup>2</sup>  
Dead and living men  
The (truly) learned do not mourn.
12. But not in any respect was I (ever) not,  
Nor thou, nor these kings;  
And not at all shall we ever come not to be,  
All of us, henceforward.
13. As to the embodied (soul) in this body  
Come childhood, youth, old age,  
So the coming to another body;  
The wise man is not confused herein.
14. But contacts with matter,<sup>3</sup> son of Kuntī,  
Cause cold and heat, pleasure and pain;  
They come and go, and are impermanent;  
Put up with them, son of Bharata!
15. For whom these (contacts) do not cause to waver,  
The man, O bull of men,  
To whom pain and pleasure are alike, the wise,<sup>4</sup>  
He is fit for immortality.
16. Of what is not, no coming to be occurs;  
No coming not to be occurs of what is;  
But the dividing-line of both is seen,  
Of these two, by those who see the truth.
17. But know that that is indestructible,  
By which this all is pervaded;  
Destruction of this imperishable one  
No one can cause.

18. antavanta ime dehā  
 nityasyo 'ktāḥ śārīrīṇaḥ  
 anāśīno 'prameyasya  
 tasmād yudhyasva bhārata
19. ya enam vetti hantāraṃ  
 yaś cai 'naṃ manyate hatam  
 ubhau tau na vijānīto  
 nā 'yaṃ hanti na hanyate
20. na jāyate mriyate vā kadācin  
 nā 'yaṃ bhūtvā bhavitā vā na bhūyaḥ  
 ajo nityaḥ śāśvato 'yaṃ purāṇo  
 na hanyate hanyamāne śarīre
21. vedā 'vināśīnaṃ nityaṃ  
 ya enam ajam avyayam  
 kathaṃ sa puruṣaḥ pārtha  
 kaṃ ghātayati hanti kam
22. vāsāṃsi jirṇāni yathā vihāya  
 navāni grhṇāti naro 'parāṇi  
 tathā śārīrāṇi vihāya jirṇāny  
 anyāni samyāti navāni dehi
23. nai 'naṃ chindanti śāstrāṇi  
 nai 'naṃ dahati pāvakaḥ  
 na cai 'naṃ kledayanty āpo  
 na śoṣayati mārutaḥ
24. acchedyo 'yam adāhyo 'yam  
 akledyo 'śoṣya eva ca  
 nityaḥ sarvagataḥ sthāṇur  
 acalo 'yaṃ sanātanaḥ
25. avyakto 'yam acintyo 'yam  
 avikāryo 'yam ucyate  
 tasmād evaṃ viditvai 'naṃ  
 nā 'nuśocitum arhasi
26. atha cai 'naṃ nityajātaṃ  
 nityaṃ vā manyase mṛtam  
 tathā 'pi tvaṃ mahābāho  
 nai 'naṃ śocitum arhasi



18. These bodies come to an end,  
It is declared, of the eternal embodied (soul),  
Which is indestructible and unfathomable.  
Therefore fight, son of Bharata!
19. Who believes him a slayer,  
And who thinks him slain,  
Both these understand not:  
He slays not, is not slain.
20. He is not born, nor does he ever die;  
Nor, having come to be, will he ever more come not to be.<sup>5</sup>  
Unborn, eternal, everlasting, this ancient one  
Is not slain when the body is slain.
21. Who knows as indestructible and eternal  
This unborn, imperishable one,  
That man, son of Pṛthā, how  
Can he slay or cause to slay — whom?
22. As leaving aside worn-out garments  
A man takes other, new ones,  
So leaving aside worn-out bodies  
To other, new ones goes the embodied (soul).
23. Swords cut him not,  
Fire burns him not,  
Water wets him not,  
Wind dries him not.
24. Not to be cut is he, not to be burnt is he,  
Not to be wet nor yet dried;  
Eternal, omnipresent, fixed,  
Immovable, everlasting is he.
25. Unmanifest he, unthinkable he,  
Unchangeable he is declared to be;  
Therefore knowing him thus  
Thou shouldst not mourn him.
26. Moreover, even if constantly born  
Or constantly dying thou considerest him,  
Even so, great-armed one, thou  
Shouldst not mourn him.

27. jātasya hi dhruvo mṛtyur  
dhruvaṃ janma mṛtasya ca  
tasmād aparihārye 'rthe  
na tvam śocitum arhasi
28. avyaktādīni bhūtāni  
vyaktamadyāni bhārata  
avyaktanidhanāny eva  
tatra kā paridevanā
29. āścaryavat paśyati kaścīd enam  
āścaryavad vadati tathai 'va cā 'nyaḥ  
āścaryavac cai 'nam anyāḥ śṛṇoti  
śrutvā 'py enam veda na cai 'va kaścit
30. dehī nityam avadhyo 'yaṃ  
dehe sarvasya bhārata  
tasmāt sarvāṇi bhūtāni  
na tvam śocitum arhasi
31. svadharmam api cā 'vekṣya  
na vikampitum arhasi  
dharmyād dhi yuddhāc chreyo 'nyat  
kṣatriyasya na vidyate
32. yadṛcchayā co 'papannaṃ  
svargadvāram apāvṛtam  
sukhinaḥ kṣatriyāḥ pārtha  
labhante yuddham idṛśam
33. atha cet tvam imaṃ dharmyaṃ  
saṃgrāmaṃ na kariṣyasi  
tataḥ svadharmam kīrtiṃ ca  
hītvā pāpam avāpsyasi
34. akīrtiṃ cā 'pi bhūtāni  
kathayiṣyanti te 'vyayāṃ  
saṃbhāvitasya cā 'kīrtir  
maraṇād atiricyate
35. bhayād raṇād uparataṃ  
maṃsyante tvāṃ mahārathāḥ  
yeṣāṃ ca tvam bahumato  
bhūtvā yāsyasi jagatām



27. For to one that is born death is certain,  
And birth is certain for one that has died;  
Therefore, the thing being unavoidable,  
Thou shouldst not mourn.
28. The beginnings of things are unmanifest,  
Manifest their middles, son of Bharata,  
Unmanifest again their ends:  
Why mourn about this?
29. By a rare chance one may see him,  
And by a rare chance likewise may another declare him,  
And by a rare chance may another hear (of) him;  
(But) even having heard (of) him, no one whatsoever knows him.
30. This embodied (soul) is eternally unslayable  
In the body of every one, son of Bharata;  
Therefore all beings  
Thou shouldst not mourn.
31. Likewise having regard for thine own (caste) duty  
Thou shouldst not tremble;  
For another, better thing than a fight required of duty  
Exists not for a warrior.
32. Presented by mere luck,  
An open door of heaven —  
Happy the warriors, son of Pṛthā,  
That get such a fight!
33. Now, if thou this duty-required  
Conflict wilt not perform,  
Then thine own duty and glory  
Abandoning, thou shalt get thee evil.
34. Disgrace, too, will creatures  
Speak of thee, without end;  
And for one that has been esteemed, disgrace  
Is worse than death.
35. That thou hast abstained from battle thru fear  
The (warriors) of great chariots will think of thee;  
And of whom thou wast highly regarded,  
Thou shalt come to be held lightly.

36. avācyavādāṃś ca bahūn  
vadiṣyanti tavā 'hitāḥ  
nindantas tava sāmarthyam  
tato duḥkhataram nu kim
37. hato vā prāpsyasi svargaṃ  
jītvā vā bhokṣyase mahīm  
tasmād uttiṣṭha kaunteya  
yuddhāya kṛtaniścayaḥ
38. sukhaduḥkhe same kṛtvā  
lābhālābhau jayājayau  
tato yuddhāya yujyasva  
nai 'vaṃ pāpam avāpsyasi
39. eṣā te 'bhihitā sāmṁkhye  
buddhir yoge tv imāṃ śṛṇu  
buddhyā yukto yayā pārtha  
karmabandhaṃ prahāsyasi
40. ne 'hā 'bhikramanāśo 'sti  
pratyavāyo na vidyate  
svalpam apy asya dharmasya  
trāyate mahato bhayāt
41. vyavasāyātmikā buddhir  
eke 'ha kurunandana  
bahuśākhā hy anantāś ca  
buddhayo 'vyavasāyinām
42. yām imāṃ puṣpitām vācam  
pravadanty avipaścitaḥ  
vedavādaratāḥ pārtha  
nā 'nyad asti 'ti vādinaḥ
43. kāmātmānaḥ svargaparā  
janmakarmaphalapradām  
kriyāviśeṣabahulāṃ  
bhogaiśvaryagatim prati
44. bhogaiśvaryaprasaktānām  
tayā 'pahṛtacetasām  
vyavasāyātmikā buddhiḥ  
samādhau na vidhīyate

36. And many sayings that should not be said  
 Thy ill-wishers will say of thee,  
 Speaking ill of thy capacity:  
 What, pray, is more grievous than that?
37. Either slain thou shalt gain heaven,  
 Or conquering thou shalt enjoy the earth.  
 Therefore arise, son of Kuntī,  
 Unto battle, making a firm resolve.
38. Holding pleasure and pain alike,  
 Gain and loss, victory and defeat,  
 Then gird thyself for battle:  
 Thus thou shalt not get evil.
39. This has been declared to thee (that is found) in Reason-method,<sup>6</sup>  
 This mental attitude: but hear this in Discipline-method,  
 Disciplined with which mental attitude, son of Pṛthā,  
 Thou shalt get rid of the bondage of action.
40. In it there is no loss of a start once made,  
 Nor does any reverse occur;  
 Even a little of this duty  
 Saves from great danger.
41. The mental attitude whose nature is resolution  
 Is but one in this world, son of Kuru;  
 For many-branched and endless  
 Are the mental attitudes of the irresolute.
42. This flowery speech which  
 Undiscerning men utter,  
 Who take delight in the words of the Veda,<sup>7</sup> son of Pṛthā,  
 Saying that there is nothing else,
43. Whose nature is desire, who are intent on heaven,  
 (The speech) which yields rebirth as the fruit of actions,<sup>8</sup>  
 Which is replete with various (ritual) acts  
 Aiming at the goal of enjoyment and power, —
44. Of men devoted to enjoyment and power,  
 Who are robbed of insight by that (speech),  
 A mental attitude resolute in nature  
 Is not established in concentration.

45. traiguṇyaviṣayā vedā  
nistraiguṇyo bhavā 'rjuna  
nirdvandvo nityasattvastho  
niryogakṣema ātmavān
46. yāvān artha udapāne  
sarvataḥ samplutodake  
tāvān sarveṣu vedeṣu  
brāhmaṇasya vijānataḥ
47. karmaṇy evā 'dhikāras te  
mā phaleṣu kadācana  
mā karmaphalahetur bhūr  
mā te saṅgo 'stv akarmaṇi
48. yogasthaḥ kuru karmāṇi  
saṅgaṃ tyaktvā dhanamjaya  
siddhyasiddhyoḥ samo bhūtvā  
samatvaṃ yoga ucyate
49. dūreṇa hy avaraṃ karma  
buddhiyogād dhanamjaya  
buddhau śaraṇam anviccha  
kṛpaṇāḥ phalahetavaḥ
50. buddhiyukto jahāti 'ha  
ubhe sukṛtaduṣkṛte  
tasmād yogāya yujyasva  
yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam
51. karmajaṃ buddhiyuktā hi  
phalaṃ tyaktvā manīṣiṇaḥ  
janmabandhavinirmuktāḥ  
padaṃ gacchanty anāmayaṃ
52. yadā te mohakalilaṃ  
buddhir vyatitariṣyati  
tadā gantāsi nirvedaṃ  
śrotavyasya śrutasya ca
53. śrutivipratipannā te  
yadā sthāsyati niścalā  
samādhāv acalā buddhis  
tadā yogam avāpsyasi

45. The Vedas have the three Strands (of matter) as their scope;  
 Be thou free from the three Strands, Arjuna,  
 Free from the pairs (of opposites), eternally fixed in goodness,<sup>9</sup>  
 Free from acquisition and possession, self-posessed.
46. As much profit as there is in a water-tank  
 When on all sides there is a flood of water,  
 No more is there in all the Vedas  
 For a brahman who (truly) understands.
47. On action alone be thy interest,  
 Never on its fruits;  
 Let not the fruits of action be thy motive,  
 Nor be thy attachment to inaction.
48. Abiding in discipline perform actions,  
 Abandoning attachment, Dhanamjaya,  
 Being indifferent to success or failure;  
 Discipline is defined as indifference.
49. For action is far inferior  
 To discipline of mental attitude, Dhanamjaya.  
 In the mental attitude seek thy (religious) refuge;  
 Wretched are those whose motive is the fruit (of action).
50. The disciplined in mental attitude leaves behind in this world  
 Both good and evil deeds.  
 Therefore discipline thyself unto discipline;  
 Discipline in actions is weal.
51. For the disciplined in mental attitude, action-produced  
 Fruit abandoning, the intelligent ones,  
 Freed from the bondage of rebirth,  
 Go to the place that is free from illness.
52. When the jungle of delusion  
 Thy mentality shall get across,  
 Then thou shalt come to aversion  
 Towards what is to be heard and has been heard (in the Veda).
53. Averse to traditional lore ('heard' in the Veda)  
 When shall stand motionless  
 Thy mentality, immovable in concentration,  
 Then thou shalt attain discipline.

arjuna uvāca

54. sthitaprajñasya kā bhāṣā  
samādhisthasya keśava  
sthitadhīḥ kiṃ prabhāṣeta  
kim āsīta vrajeta kim

śrībhagavān uvāca

55. prajahāti yadā kāmān  
sarvān pārtha manogatān  
ātmany evā 'tmanā tuṣṭaḥ  
sthitaprajñas tado 'cyate
56. duḥkheṣv anudvignamanāḥ  
sukheṣu vigatasprhaḥ  
vītarāgabhayakrodhaḥ  
sthitadhīr munir ucyate
57. yaḥ sarvatrā 'nabhisnehas  
tat-tat prāpya śubhāśubham  
nā 'bhinandati na dveṣṭi  
tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā
58. yadā saṃharate cā 'yaṃ  
kūrmo 'ṅgānī 'va sarvaśaḥ  
indriyāṇi 'ndriyārthebhyas  
tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā
59. viṣayā vinivartante  
nirāhārasya dehinaḥ  
rasavarjaṃ raso 'py asya  
paraṃ dṛṣṭvā nivartate
60. yatato hy api kaunteya  
puruṣasya vipaścitaḥ  
indriyāṇi pramāthīni  
haranti prasabhaṃ manaḥ
61. tāni sarvāṇi saṃyamya  
yukta āsīta matparaḥ  
vaśe hi yasye 'ndriyāṇi  
tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā
62. dhyāyato viṣayān puṃsaḥ  
saṅgas teṣū 'pajāyate  
saṅgāt saṃjāyate kāmaḥ  
kāmāt krodho 'bhijāyate



Arjuna said:

54. What is the description of the man of stabilized mentality,  
That is fixed in concentration, Keśava?  
How might the man of stabilized mentality speak,  
How might he sit, how walk?

The Blessed One said:

55. When he abandons desires,  
All that are in the mind, son of Pṛthā,  
Finding contentment by himself in the self alone,  
Then he is called of stabilized mentality.
56. When his mind is not perturbed in sorrows,  
And he has lost desire for joys,  
His longing, fear, and wrath departed,  
He is called a stable-minded holy man.
57. Who has no desire towards any thing,  
And getting this or that good or evil  
Neither delights in it nor loathes it,  
His mentality is stabilized.
58. And when he withdraws,  
As a tortoise his limbs from all sides,  
His senses from the objects of sense,  
His mentality is stabilized.
59. The objects of sense turn away  
From the embodied one that abstains from food,  
Except flavor; <sup>10</sup> flavor also from him  
Turns away when he has seen the highest.
60. For even of one who strives, son of Kuntī,  
Of the man of discernment,  
The impetuous senses  
Carry away the mind by violence.
61. Them all restraining,  
Let him sit disciplined, intent on Me;  
For whose senses are under control,  
His mentality is stabilized.
62. When a man meditates on the objects of sense,  
Attachment to them is produced.  
From attachment springs desire,  
From desire wrath arises;

63. krodhād bhavati saṁmohaḥ  
saṁmohāt smṛtivyibhramaḥ  
smṛtivyibhramśād buddhināśo  
buddhināśāt prapaśyati
64. rāga-dveṣa-viyuktais tu  
viśayān indriyaiś caran  
ātma-vaśyair vidheyātmā  
prasādam adhi-gacchati
65. prasāde sarva-duḥkhānāṁ  
hānir asyo 'pajāyate  
prasanna-cetaso hy āśu  
buddhiḥ paryavatiṣṭhate
66. nā 'sti buddhir ayuktasya  
na cā 'yuktasya bhāvanā  
na cā 'bhāva-yataḥ śāntir  
aśāntasya kutaḥ sukham
67. indriyāṇāṁ hi caratām  
yaṁ mano 'nuvidhiyate  
tad asya harati prajñāṁ  
vāyur nāvam ivā 'mbhasi
68. tasmād yasya mahābāho  
nigṛhītāni sarvaśaḥ  
indriyāṇi 'ndriyārthebhyas  
tasya prajñā pratiṣṭhitā
69. yā niśā sarva-bhūtānāṁ  
tasyāṁ jāgarti saṁyamī  
yasyāṁ jāgrati bhūtāni  
sā niśā paśyato muneḥ
70. āpūryamāṇam acala-pratiṣṭhaṁ  
samudram āpaḥ praviśanti yadvat  
tadvat kāmā yaṁ praviśanti sarve  
sa śāntim āpnoti na kāmakāmī
71. vihāya kāmān yaḥ sarvān  
pumāṁś carati nīḥ-sprhaḥ  
nirmamo nirahaṁkāraḥ  
sa śāntim adhi-gacchati

63. From wrath comes infatuation,  
From infatuation loss of memory;  
From loss of memory, loss of mind;  
From loss of mind he perishes.
64. But with desire-and-loathing-severed  
Senses acting on the objects of sense,  
With (senses) self-controlled, he, governing his self,  
Goes unto tranquillity.
65. In tranquillity, of all griefs  
Riddance is engendered for him;  
For of the tranquil-minded quickly  
The mentality becomes stable.
66. The undisciplined has no (right) mentality,  
And the undisciplined has no efficient-force; <sup>11</sup>  
Who has no efficient-force has no peace;  
For him that has no peace how can there be bliss?
67. For the senses are roving,  
And when the thought-organ is directed after them,  
It carries away his mentality,  
As wind a ship on the water.
68. Therefore whosoever, great-armed one,  
Has withdrawn on all sides  
The senses from the objects of sense,  
His mentality is stabilized.
69. What is night for all beings,  
Therein the man of restraint is awake;  
Wherein (other) beings are awake,  
That is night for the sage of vision.
70. It is ever being filled, and (yet) its foundation <sup>12</sup> remains unmoved —  
The sea: just as waters enter it,  
Whom all desires enter in that same way  
He attains peace; not the man who lusts after desires.
71. Abandoning all desires, what  
Man moves free from longing,  
Without self-interest and egotism,  
He goes to peace.

72. eṣā brāhmī sthitiḥ pārtha  
nai 'nām prāpya vimuhyati  
sthitvā 'syām antakāle 'pi  
brahmanirvāṇam ṛcchati  
iti sāmkhya-yogo nāma dvitīyo 'dhyāyaḥ

72. This is the fixation that is Brahmanic,<sup>13</sup> son of Pṛthā;  
Having attained it he is not (again) confused.  
Abiding in it even at the time of death,  
He goes to Brahman-nirvāṇa.<sup>14</sup>

Here ends the Second Chapter, called Discipline of Reason-method.

### III

arjuna uvāca

1. jyāyasī cet karmaṇas te  
matā buddhir janārdana  
tat kiṃ karmaṇi ghore māṃ  
niyojayasi keśava
2. vyāmiśreṇe 'va vākyena  
buddhiṃ mohayasī 'va me  
tad ekaṃ vada niścitya  
yena śreyo 'ham āpnuyām

śrībhagavān uvāca

3. loka 'smin dvividhā niṣṭhā  
purā proktā mayā 'nagha  
jñānayogena sāmkyānām  
karmayogena yoginām
4. na karmaṇām anārambhān  
naiṣkarmyaṃ puruṣo 'śnute  
na ca saṃnyasanād eva  
siddhiṃ samadhigacchati
5. na hi kaścit kṣaṇam api  
jātu tiṣṭhaty akarmakṛt  
kāryate hy avaśaḥ karma  
sarvaḥ prakṛtijair guṇaiḥ
6. karmendriyāṇi saṃyamya  
ya āste manasā smaran  
indriyārthān vimūḍhātmā  
mithyācāraḥ sa ucyate
7. yas tv indriyāṇi manasā  
niyamya 'rabhate 'rjuna  
karmendriyaiḥ karmayogam  
asaktaḥ sa viśiṣyate
8. niyataṃ kuru karma tvaṃ  
karma jyāyo hy akarmaṇaḥ  
śarīrayātrā 'pi ca te  
na prasidhyed akarmaṇaḥ

## CHAPTER III

Arjuna said:

1. If more important than action  
The mental attitude is held of Thee, Janārdana,  
Then why to violent action  
Dost Thou enjoin me, Keśava?
2. With words that seem <sup>1</sup> confused  
Thou apparently bewilderest my intellect.  
So tell me one thing definitely,  
Whereby I may attain welfare.

The Blessed One said:

3. In this world a two-fold basis (of religion)  
Has been declared by Me of old, blameless one:  
By the discipline of knowledge of the followers of reason-method,<sup>2</sup>  
And by the discipline of action of the followers of discipline-method
4. Not by not starting actions  
Does a man attain actionlessness,  
And not by renunciation alone  
Does he go to perfection.
5. For no one even for a moment  
Remains at all without performing actions;  
For he is made to perform action willy-nilly,  
Every one is, by the Strands that spring from material nature.
6. Restraining the action-senses  
Who sits pondering with his thought-organ  
On the objects of sense, with deluded soul,  
He is called a hypocrite.
7. But whoso the senses with the thought-organ  
Controlling, O Arjuna, undertakes  
Discipline of action with the action-senses,  
Unattached (to the fruits of action), he is superior.
8. Perform thou action that is (religiously) required;  
For action is better than inaction.  
And even the maintenance of the body for thee  
Can not succeed without action.

9. yajñārthāt karmaṇo 'nyatra  
loko 'yam karmabandhanaḥ  
tadarthaṃ karma kaunteya  
muktasaṅgaḥ samācara
10. sahayajñāḥ prajāḥ sṛṣṭvā  
puro 'vāca prajāpatiḥ  
anena prasaviṣyadhvam  
eṣa vo 'stv iṣṭakāmadhuk
11. devān bhāvayatā 'nena  
te devā bhāvayantu vaḥ  
parasparaṃ bhāvayantaḥ  
śreyasḥ param avāpsyatha
12. iṣṭān bhogān hi vo devā  
dāsyante yajñabhāvitāḥ  
tair dattān apradāyai 'bhyo  
yo bhuṅkte stena eva saḥ
13. yajñaśiṣṭāśīnaḥ santo  
mucyante sarvakilbiṣaiḥ  
bhuñjate te tv aghaṃ pāpā  
ye pacanty ātmakāraṇāt
14. annād bhavanti bhūtāni  
parjanyaād annasaṃbhavaḥ  
yajñād bhavati parjanya  
yajñaḥ karmasamudbhavaḥ
15. karma brahmodbhavaṃ viddhi  
brahmā 'kṣarasamudbhavam  
tasmāt sarvagataṃ brahma  
nityaṃ yajñe pratiṣṭhitam
16. evaṃ pravartitaṃ cakraṃ  
nā 'nuvartayati 'ha yaḥ  
aghāyur indriyārāmo  
moghaṃ pārtha sa jīvati
17. yas tv ātmaratir eva syād  
ātmatṛptaś ca mānavaḥ  
ātmany eva ca saṃtuṣṭas  
tasya kāryaṃ na vidyate



9. Except action for the purpose of worship,  
This world is bound by actions;  
Action for that purpose, son of Kuntī,  
Perform thou, free from attachment (to its fruits).
10. After creating creatures along with (rites of) worship,  
Prajāpati (the Creator) said of old:  
By this ye shall procreate yourselves —  
Let this be your Cow-of-Wishes.
11. With this prosper ye the gods,  
And let the gods prosper you;  
(Thus) prospering one the other,  
Ye shall attain the highest welfare.
12. For desired enjoyments to you the gods  
Will give, prospered by worship;  
Without giving to them, their gifts  
Whoso enjoys, is nothing but a thief.
13. Good men who eat the remnants of (food offered in) worship  
Are freed from all sins;  
But those wicked men eat evil  
Who cook for their own selfish sakes.
14. Beings originate from food;  
From the rain-god food arises;  
From worship comes the rain(-god);  
Worship originates in action.
15. Action arises from Brahman,<sup>3</sup> know;  
And Brahman springs from the Imperishable;  
Therefore the universal Brahman  
Is eternally based on worship.
16. The wheel thus set in motion  
Who does not keep turning in this world,  
Malignant,<sup>4</sup> delighting in the senses,  
He lives in vain, son of Pṛthā.
17. But who takes delight in the self alone,  
The man who finds contentment in the self,  
And satisfaction only in the self,  
For him there is found (in effect) no action to perform.

18. nai 'va tasya kṛtenā 'rtho  
nā 'kṛtene 'ha kaścana  
na cā 'sya sarvabhūteṣu  
kaścīd arthavyapāśrayaḥ
19. tasmād asaktaḥ satataṁ  
kāryaṁ karma samācara  
asakto hy ācāraṁ karma  
param āpnoti pūruṣaḥ
20. karmaṇai 'va hi saṁsiddhim  
āsthītā janakādayaḥ  
lokasaṁgraham evā 'pi  
saṁpāśyaṁ kartum arhasi
21. yad-yad ācarati śreṣṭhas  
tat-tad eve 'taro janaḥ  
sa yat pramāṇaṁ kurute  
lokaḥ tad anuvartate
22. na me pārthā 'sti kartavyaṁ  
triṣu lokeṣu kiṁcana  
nā 'navāptam avāptavyaṁ  
varta eva ca karmaṇi
23. yadi hy ahaṁ na varteyaṁ  
jātu karmaṇy atandritaḥ  
mama vartmā 'nuvartante  
manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ
24. utsīdeyur ime lokā  
na kuryāṁ karma ced ahaṁ  
saṁkarasya ca kartā syāṁ  
upahanyāṁ imāḥ prajāḥ
25. saktāḥ karmaṇy avidvāṁso  
yathā kurvanti bhārata  
kuryād vidvāṁs tathā 'saktaś  
cikīrṣur lokasaṁgraham
26. na buddhibhedam janayed  
ajñānāṁ karmasaṅginām  
joṣayet sarvakarmāṇi  
vidvān yuktaḥ samācāraṁ

18. He has no interest whatever in action done,  
Nor any in action not done in this world,  
Nor has he in reference to all beings  
Any dependence of interest.
19. Therefore unattached ever  
Perform action that must be done;  
For performing action without attachment  
Man attains the highest.
20. For only thru action, perfection  
Attained Janaka and others.  
Also for the mere control of the world  
Having regard, thou shouldst act.
21. Whatsoever the noblest does,  
Just that in every case other folk (do);  
What he makes his standard,  
That the world follows.
22. For Me, son of Pṛthā, there is nothing to be done  
In the three worlds whatsoever,  
Nothing unattained to be attained;  
And yet I still continue in action.
23. For if I did not continue  
At all in action, unwearied,  
My path (would) follow  
Men altogether, son of Pṛthā.
24. These folk would perish  
If I did not perform action,  
And I should be an agent of confusion;  
I should destroy these creatures.
25. Fools, attached to action,  
As they act, son of Bharata,  
So the wise man should act (but) unattached,  
Seeking to effect the control of the world.
26. Let him not cause confusion of mind  
In ignorant folk who are attached to action;  
He should let them enjoy all actions,  
The wise man, (himself) acting disciplined.

27. prakṛteḥ kriyamāṇāni  
 guṇaiḥ karmāṇi sarvaśaḥ  
 ahaṁkāravimūḍhātmā  
 kartā 'ham iti manyate
28. tattvavit tu mahābāho  
 guṇakarmavibhāgayoḥ  
 guṇā guṇeṣu vartanta  
 iti matvā na sajjate
29. prakṛter guṇasaṁmūḍhāḥ  
 sajjante guṇakarmasu  
 tān akṛtsnavido mandān  
 kṛtsnavin na vicālayet
30. mayi sarvāṇi karmāṇi  
 saṁnyasyā 'dhyātmacetasā  
 nīrāśīr nirmamo bhūtvā  
 yudhyasva vigatajvaraḥ
31. ye me matam idaṁ nityam  
 anuṣṭhanti mānavāḥ  
 śraddhāvanto 'nasūyanto  
 mucyante te 'pi karmabhiḥ
32. ye tv etad abhyasūyanto  
 nā 'nuṣṭhanti me matam  
 sarvajñānavimūḍhāṁs tān  
 viddhi naṣṭān acetasaḥ
33. sadṛśaṁ ceṣṭate svasyāḥ  
 prakṛter jñānavān api  
 prakṛtiṁ yānti bhūtāni  
 nigrahaḥ kiṁ kariṣyati
34. indriyasye 'ndriyasyā 'rthe  
 rāgadveṣau vyavasthitau  
 tayoṛ na vaśam āgacchet  
 tau hy asya paripanthinau
35. śreyān svadharmo viguṇaḥ  
 paradharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt  
 svadharme nidhanaṁ śreyāḥ  
 paradharmo bhayāvahaḥ

27. Performed by material nature's  
Strands are actions, altogether;  
He whose soul is deluded by the I-faculty  
Imagines 'I am the agent.'
28. But he who knows the truth, great-armed one,  
About the separation (of the soul) from both the Strands and action,  
'The Strands act upon the Strands' —  
Knowing this, is not attached (to actions).
29. Deluded by the Strands of material nature,  
Men are attached to the actions of the Strands.  
These dull folk of imperfect knowledge  
The man of perfect knowledge should not disturb.
30. On Me all actions  
Casting,<sup>5</sup> with mind on the over-soul,  
Being free from longing and from selfishness,  
Fight, casting off thy fever.
31. Who this My doctrine constantly  
Follow, such men,  
Full of faith and not murmuring,  
They too are freed from (the effect of) actions.
32. But those who, murmuring against it,  
Do not follow My doctrine,  
Them, deluded in all knowledge,  
Know to be lost, the fools.
33. One acts in conformity with his own  
Material nature, — even the wise man;  
Beings follow (their own) nature;  
What will restraint accomplish?
34. Of (every) sense, upon the objects of (that) sense  
Longing and loathing are fixed;  
One must not come under control of those two,  
For they are his two enemies.
35. Better one's own duty, (tho) imperfect,  
Than another's duty well performed;  
Better death in (doing) one's own duty;  
Another's duty brings danger.

arjuna uvāca

36. atha kena prayukto 'yaṃ  
pāpaṃ carati pūruṣaḥ  
anicchann api vārṣṇeya  
balād iva niyojitaḥ

śrībhagavān uvāca

37. kāma eṣa krodha eṣa  
rajoguṇasamudbhavaḥ  
mahāśano mahāpāpmā  
viddhy enam iha vairiṇam

38. dhūmenā 'vriyate vahnir  
yathā 'darśo malena ca  
yatho 'lbenā 'vṛto garbhas  
tathā tene 'dam āvṛtam

39. āvṛtaṃ jñānam etena  
jñānino nityavairiṇā  
kāmarūpeṇa kaunteya  
duṣpūreṇā 'nalena ca

40. indriyāṇi mano buddhir  
asyā 'dhiṣṭhānam ucyate  
etair vimohayaty eṣa  
jñānam āvṛtya dehinam

41. tasmāt tvam indriyāṇy ādau  
niyamya bharatarṣabha  
pāpmānaṃ prajahi hy enam  
jñānavijñānanāśanam

42. indriyāṇi parāṇy āhur  
indriyebhyaḥ paraṃ manaḥ  
manasas tu parā buddhir  
yo buddheḥ paratas tu saḥ

43. evaṃ buddheḥ paraṃ buddhvā  
saṃstabhyā 'tmānam ātmanā  
jahi śatruṃ mahābāho  
kāmarūpaṃ durāsadam

iti karmayogo nāma tṛtīyo 'dhyāyaḥ

Arjuna said:

36. Then by what impelled does this  
Man commit sin,  
Even against his will, Vṛṣṇi-clansman,  
As if driven by force?

The Blessed One said:

37. It is desire, it is wrath,  
Arising from the Strand of passion,  
All-consuming, very sinful;  
Know that this is the enemy here.
38. As fire is obscured by smoke,  
And as a mirror by dirt,  
As the embryo is covered by its membrane-envelope,  
So this (universe<sup>6</sup>) is obscured thereby.
39. By this is obscured the knowledge  
Of the knowing one, by this his eternal foe,  
That has the form of desire, son of Kuntī,  
And is an insatiable fire.
40. The senses, the thought-organ, the consciousness,  
Are declared to be its basis;  
With these it confuses  
The embodied (soul), obscuring his knowledge.
41. Thou therefore, the senses first  
Controlling, O bull of Bharatas,  
Smite down this evil one,  
That destroys theoretical and practical knowledge.<sup>7</sup>
42. The senses, they say, are high;  
Higher than the senses is the thought-organ;  
But higher than the thought-organ is the consciousness;  
While higher than the consciousness is He (the soul).
43. Thus being conscious of that which is higher than consciousness,  
Steadying the self by the self,  
Smite the enemy, great-armed one,  
That has the form of desire, and is hard to get at.
- Here ends the Third Chapter, called Discipline of Action.

## IV

śrībhagavān uvāca

1. imaṃ vivasvate yogaṃ  
proktavān ahaṃ avyayam  
vivasvān manave prāha  
manur ikṣvākave 'bravīt
2. evaṃ paraṃparāprāptam  
imaṃ rājarṣayo viduḥ  
sa kālēne 'ha mahatā  
yogo naṣṭaḥ paraṃtapa
3. sa evā 'yaṃ mayā te 'dya  
yogaḥ proktaḥ purāṇaḥ  
bhakto 'si me sakhā ce 'ti  
rahasyaṃ hy etad uttamam

arjuna uvāca

4. aparaṃ bhavato janma  
paraṃ janma vivasvataḥ  
katham etad vijānīyāṃ  
tvam ādau proktavān iti

śrībhagavān uvāca

5. bahūni me vyatītāni  
janmāni tava cā 'rjuna  
tāny ahaṃ veda sarvāṇi  
na tvam vettha paraṃtapa
6. ajo 'pi sann avyayātmā  
bhūtānām īśvaro 'pi san  
prakṛtiṃ svām adhiṣṭhāya  
sambhavāmy ātmamāyayā
7. yadā-yadā hi dharmasya  
glānir bhavati bhārata  
abhyutthānam adharmasya  
tadā 'tmānaṃ sṛjāmy aham
8. paritrāṇāya sādhūnāṃ  
vināśāya ca duṣkṛtām  
dharmasaṃsthāpanārthāya  
sambhavāmi yuge-yuge



## CHAPTER IV

The Blessed One said:

1. This discipline to Vivasvant  
I proclaimed; 'tis eternal;  
Vivasvant told it to Manu,  
Manu spake it to Ikṣvāku.
2. Thus received in line of succession,  
The royal seers knew it.  
In a long course of time in this world this  
Discipline became lost, scorcher of the foe.
3. This very same by Me to thee today,  
This ancient discipline, is proclaimed.  
Thou art My devotee and friend, that is why;  
For this is a supreme secret.

Arjuna said:

4. Later Thy birth,  
Earlier the birth of Vivasvant:  
How may I understand this,  
That Thou didst proclaim it in the beginning, as Thou sayest?

The Blessed One said:

5. For Me have passed many  
Births, and for thee, Arjuna;  
These I know all;  
Thou knowest not, scorcher of the foe.
6. Tho unborn, tho My self is eternal,  
Tho Lord of Beings,  
Resorting to My own material nature  
I come into being by My own mysterious power.
7. For whenever of the right  
A languishing appears, son of Bharata,  
A rising up of unright,  
Then I send Myself forth.
8. For protection of the good,  
And for destruction of evil-doers,  
To make a firm footing for the right,  
I come into being in age after age.

9. janma karma ca me divyam  
evam yo vetti tattvataḥ  
tyaktvā dehaṃ punarjanma  
nai 'ti mām eti so 'rjuna
10. vitarāgabhayakrodhā  
manmayā mām upāśritāḥ  
bahavo jñānatapasā  
pūtā madbhāvam āgatāḥ
11. ye yathā mām prapadyante  
tāṃs tathai 'va bhajāmy aham  
mama vartmā 'nuvartante  
manuṣyāḥ pārtha sarvaśaḥ
12. kāṅkṣantaḥ karmaṇām siddhiṃ  
yajanta iha devatāḥ  
kṣipraṃ hi mānuṣe loke  
siddhir bhavati karmajā
13. cāturvarṇyaṃ mayā sṛṣṭaṃ  
guṇakarmavibhāgaśaḥ  
tasya kartāram api mām  
viddhy akartāram avyayam
14. na mām karmāṇi limpanti  
na me karmaphale sprhā  
iti mām yo 'bhijānāti  
karmabhir na sa baḍhyate
15. evaṃ jñātvā kṛtaṃ karma  
pūrvair api mumukṣubhiḥ  
kuru karmai 'va tasmāt tvaṃ  
pūrvaiḥ pūrvataraṃ kṛtam
16. kiṃ karma kim akarme 'ti  
kavayo 'py atra mohitāḥ  
tat te karma pravakṣyāmi  
yaj jñātvā mokṣyase 'śubhāt
17. karmaṇo hy api boddhavyaṃ  
boddhavyaṃ ca vikarmaṇaḥ  
akarmaṇaś ca boddhavyaṃ  
gahanā karmaṇo gatiḥ

9. My wondrous birth and actions  
     Whoso knows thus as they truly are,  
     On leaving the body, to rebirth  
     He goes not; to Me he goes, Arjuna!
10. Rid of passion, fear, and wrath,  
     Made of Me, taking refuge in Me,  
     Many by the austerity of knowledge  
     Purified, have come to My estate.
11. In whatsoever way any come to Me,  
     In that same way I grant them favor.  
     My path follow  
     Men altogether, son of Pṛthā.
12. Desiring the success of (ritual) acts,  
     They worship the (Vedic) deities in this world;  
     For quickly in the world of men  
     Comes the success that springs from (ritual) acts.
13. The four-caste-system was created by Me  
     With distinction of Strands and actions (appropriate to each);  
     Altho I am the doer of this,  
     Know Me as one that eternally does no act.
14. Actions do not stain Me,  
     (Because) I have no yearning for the fruit of actions.  
     Who comprehends Me thus  
     Is not bound by actions.
15. Knowing this, action was done  
     Also by the ancient seekers of salvation.  
     Therefore do thou simply do actions,  
     As was done of old by the ancients.
16. What is action, what inaction?  
     About this even sages are bewildered.  
     So I shall explain action to thee,  
     Knowing which, thou shalt be freed from evil.
17. For one must understand the nature of action, on the one hand,  
     And must understand the nature of mis-action,  
     And must understand the nature of inaction:  
     Hard to penetrate is the course of action.

18. karmaṇy akarma yaḥ paśyed  
akarmaṇi ca karma yaḥ  
sa buddhimān manuṣyeṣu  
sa yuktaḥ kṛtsnakarmakṛt
19. yasya sarve samārambhāḥ  
kāmasaṃkalpavarjitāḥ  
jñānāgnidagdhakarmāṇaṃ  
tam āhuḥ paṇḍitaṃ budhāḥ
20. tyaktvā karmaphalāsaṅgaṃ  
nityatṛpto nirāśrayaḥ  
karmaṇy abhipravṛtto 'pi  
nai 'va kiṃcit karoti saḥ
21. nirāśir yatacittātmā  
tyaktasarvaparigrahaḥ  
śārīraṃ kevalaṃ karma  
kurvan nā 'pnoti kilbiṣaṃ
22. yadṛcchālābhasaṃtuṣṭo  
dvandvātīto vimatsaraḥ  
samaḥ siddhāv asiddhau ca  
kṛtvā 'pi na nibadhyate
23. gatasāṅgasya muktasya  
jñānāvasthitacetasaḥ  
yajñāyā 'carataḥ karma  
samagraṃ pravilīyate
24. brahmā 'rpaṇaṃ brahma havir  
brahmāgnau brahmaṇā hutam  
brahmai 'va tena gantavyaṃ  
brahmakarmasamādhinā
25. daivam evā 'pare yajñaṃ  
yoginaḥ paryupāsate  
brahmāgnāv apare yajñaṃ  
yajñenai 'vo 'pajuhvati
26. śrotrādīnī 'ndriyāṇy anye  
saṃyamāgniṣu juhvati  
śabdādīn viśayān anya  
indriyāgniṣu juhvati

18. Who sees inaction in action,  
And action in inaction,  
He is enlightened among men;  
He does all actions, disciplined.
19. All whose undertakings  
Are free from desire and purpose,  
His actions burnt up in the fire of knowledge,  
Him the wise call the man of learning.
20. Abandoning attachment to the fruits of action,  
Constantly content, independent,  
Even when he sets out upon action,  
He yet does (in effect) nothing whatsoever.
21. Free from wishes, with mind and soul restrained,  
Abandoning all possessions,  
Action with the body alone  
Performing, he attains no guilt.
22. Content with getting what comes by chance,  
Passed beyond the pairs (of opposites), free from jealousy,  
Indifferent to success and failure,  
Even acting, he is not bound.
23. Rid of attachment, freed,  
His mind fixed in knowledge,  
Doing acts for worship (only), his action  
All melts away.
24. The (sacrificial) presentation is Brahman; Brahman is the oblation;  
In the (sacrificial) fire of Brahman it is poured by Brahman;  
Just to Brahman must he go,  
Being concentrated upon the (sacrificial) action that is Brahman.
25. To naught but sacrifice to the deities some <sup>1</sup>  
Disciplined men devote themselves.  
In the (sacrificial) fire of Brahman, others <sup>2</sup> the sacrifice  
Offer up by the sacrifice itself.
26. The senses, hearing and the rest, others <sup>3</sup>  
Offer up in the fires of restraint;  
The objects of sense, sound and the rest, others <sup>4</sup>  
Offer up in the fires of the senses.

27. sarvāṇi 'ndriyakarmāṇi  
prāṇakarmāṇi cā 'pare  
ātmasaṃyamayogāgnau  
juhvati jñānadīpīte
28. dravyayajñās tapoyajñā  
yogayajñās tathā 'pare  
svādhyāyajñānayajñāś ca  
yatayaḥ saṃśītavratāḥ
29. apāne juhvati prāṇaṃ  
prāṇe 'pānaṃ tathā 'pare  
prāṇāpānagatī ruddhvā  
prāṇāyāmaparāyaṇāḥ
30. apare niyatāhārāḥ  
prāṇān prāṇeṣu juhvati  
sarve 'py ete yajñavidō  
yajñakṣapitakalmaṣāḥ
31. yajñāśiṣṭāmṛtabhujo  
yānti brahma sanātanam  
nā 'yaṃ loko 'sty ayajñasya  
kuto 'nyaḥ kuruṣattama
32. evaṃ bahuvidhā yajñā  
vitatā brahmaṇo mukhe  
karmajān viddhi tān sarvān  
evaṃ jñātvā vimokṣyase
33. śreyān dravyamayād yajñāj  
jñānayajñāḥ paramtapa  
sarvaṃ karmā 'khilaṃ pārtha  
jñāne parisamāpyate
34. tad viddhi praṇipātena  
paripraśnena sevayā  
upadekṣyanti te jñānaṃ  
jñāninas tattvadarśinaḥ
35. yaj jñātvā na punar moham  
evaṃ yāsyasi pāṇḍava  
yena bhūtāny aśeṣeṇa  
drakṣyasy ātmany atho mayi

27. All actions of the senses  
 And actions of breath, others <sup>5</sup>  
 In the fire of the discipline of control of self  
 Offer up, when it has been kindled by knowledge.
28. Sacrificers with substance, sacrificers with austerities,  
 Sacrificers with discipline likewise are others,  
 And sacrificers with study of the Sacred Word and with knowledge,  
 Religious men, with strict vows.
29. In the nether life-breath the upper life-breath offer up  
 Others, <sup>6</sup> likewise the nether in the upper life-breath,  
 Checking the courses of the upper and nether life-breaths,  
 Intent upon restraint of breath.
30. Others <sup>7</sup> restrict their food and (so)  
 Offer up the life-breaths in the life-breaths.  
 All these know what sacrifice is,  
 And their sins are destroyed by sacrifice.
31. Those who eat the nectar of the leavings of the sacrifice  
 Go to the eternal Brahman.  
 Not (even) this world is for him who does not sacrifice;  
 How then the next, O best of Kurus?
32. Thus many kinds of sacrifice  
 Are spread out <sup>8</sup> in the face <sup>9</sup> of Brahman.  
 Know that they all spring from action!  
 Knowing this thou shalt be freed.
33. Better than sacrifice that consists of substance  
 Is the sacrifice of knowledge, scorcher of the foe.  
 All action without remainder, son of Pṛthā,  
 Is completely ended in knowledge.
34. Learn to know this by obeisance (to those who can teach it),  
 By questioning (them), by serving (them);  
 They will teach thee knowledge,  
 Those who have knowledge, who see the truth.
35. Knowing which, not again to bewilderment  
 In this manner shalt thou go, son of Pāṇḍu;  
 Whereby all beings without exception  
 Thou shalt see in thyself, and also in Me.

36. api ced asi pāpebhyaḥ  
sarvebhyaḥ pāpakṛttamaḥ  
sarvaṃ jñānaplavenai 'va  
vrjinaṃ saṃtariṣyasi
37. yathai 'dhāṃsi samiddho 'gnir  
bhasmasāt kurute 'rjuna  
jñānāgniḥ sarvakarmāṇi  
bhasmasāt kurute tathā
38. na hi jñānena sadṛśaṃ  
pavitram iha vidyate  
tat svayaṃ yogasaṃsiddhaḥ  
kālenā 'tmani vindati
39. śraddhāvāṃl labhate jñānaṃ  
tatparaḥ saṃyatendriyaḥ  
jñānaṃ labdhvā parāṃ śāntim  
acireṇā 'dhigacchati
40. ajñāś cā 'śraddadhānaś ca  
saṃśayaātmā vinaśyati  
nā 'yaṃ loko 'sti na paro  
na sukhaṃ saṃśayaātmanaḥ
41. yogasaṃnyastakarmāṇaṃ  
jñānasamchinnasaṃśayaṃ  
ātmavantaṃ na karmāṇi  
nibadhnanti dhanamjaya
42. tasmād ajñānasambhūtaṃ  
hṛtsthaṃ jñānāsinā 'tmanaḥ  
chittvai 'naṃ saṃśayaṃ yogam  
ātiṣṭho 'ttiṣṭha bhārata
- iti jñānayogo nāma caturtho 'dhyāyaḥ



36. Even if thou art of sinners  
     The worst sinner of all,  
 Merely by the boat of knowledge all  
     (The 'sea' of) evil shalt thou cross over.
37. As firewood a kindled fire  
     Reduces to ashes, Arjuna,  
 The fire of knowledge all actions  
     Reduces to ashes even so.
38. For not like unto knowledge  
     Is any purifier found in this world.  
 This the man perfected in discipline himself  
     In time finds in himself.
39. The man of faith gets knowledge,  
     Intent solely upon it, restraining his senses.  
 Having got knowledge, to supreme peace  
     In no long time he goes.
40. The man unknowing and without faith,  
     His soul full of doubt, perishes.  
 Not is this world, nor the next,  
     Nor bliss, for him whose soul is full of doubt.
41. Him that has renounced actions in discipline,  
     That has cut off his doubt with knowledge,  
 The self-possessed, no actions  
     Bind, O Dhananjaya.
42. Therefore this that springs from ignorance,  
     That lies in the heart, with the sword of knowledge thine own  
 Doubt cutting off, to discipline  
     Resort: arise, son of Bharata!

Here ends the Fourth Chapter, called Discipline of Knowledge.

## V

### arjuna uvāca

1. saṁnyāsaṁ karmaṇāṁ kṛṣṇa  
punar yogaṁ ca śaṁsasi  
yac chreya etayor ekaṁ  
tan me brūhi suniścitam

### śrībhagavān uvāca

2. saṁnyāsaḥ karmayogaś ca  
niḥśreyasakarāv ubhau  
tayos tu karmasaṁnyāsāt  
karmayogo viśiṣyate
3. jñeyah sa nityasaṁnyāsī  
yo na dveṣṭi na kāṅkṣati  
nirdvandvo hi mahābāho  
sukhaṁ bandhāt pramucyate
4. sām̐khyayogau prthag bālāḥ  
pravadanti na paṇḍitāḥ  
ekaṁ apy āsthitaḥ samyag  
ubhayor vindate phalam
5. yat sām̐khyaiḥ prāpyate sthānaṁ  
tad yogair api gamyate  
ekaṁ sām̐khyam ca yogaṁ ca  
yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati
6. saṁnyāsaḥ tu mahābāho  
duḥkham āptum ayogataḥ  
yogayukto munir brahma  
nacireṇā 'dhigacchati
7. yogayukto viśuddhātmā  
vijitātmā jitendriyaḥ  
sarvabhūtātmabhūtātmā  
kurvann api na lipyate
8. nai 'va kiṁcit karomī 'ti  
yukto manyeta tattvavit  
paśyañ śṛṇvan sprśaṇ jighraṇ  
āśnan gacchan svapaṇ śvasan

## CHAPTER V

Arjuna said:

1. Renunciation of actions, Kṛṣṇa,  
And again discipline Thou approvest;  
Which one is the better of these two,  
That tell me definitely.

The Blessed One said:

2. Renunciation and discipline of action  
Both lead to supreme weal.  
But of these two, rather than renunciation of action,  
Discipline of action is superior.
3. He is to be recognized as (in effect) forever renouncing (action),  
Who neither loathes nor craves;  
For he that is free from the pairs (of opposites), great-armed one,  
Is easily freed from bondage (otherwise caused by actions).
4. Of reason-method <sup>1</sup> and discipline as separate, fools  
Speak, not the wise;  
Resorting to even one of them, completely  
Man wins the fruit of both.
5. What place is gained by the followers of reason-method,  
That is reached also by the followers of discipline(-method).  
That reason-method and discipline are one  
Who sees, he (truly) sees.
6. But renunciation, great-armed one,  
Is hard to attain without discipline;  
Disciplined in discipline, to Brahman the sage  
Goes in no long time.
7. Disciplined in discipline, with purified self,  
Self-subdued, with senses overcome,  
His self become (one with) the self of all beings,  
Even acting, he is not stained.
8. 'I am (in effect) doing nothing at all!' - - so  
The disciplined man should think, knowing the truth,  
When he sees, hears, touches, smells,  
Eats, walks, sleeps, breathes,

9. pralapan visrjan grhṇann  
unmiṣan nimiṣann api  
indriyāṇi 'ndriyārtheṣu  
vartanta iti dhārayan
10. brahmaṇy ādhāya karmāṇi  
saṅgaṃ tyaktvā karoti yaḥ  
lipyate na sa pāpena  
padmapattram ivā 'mbhasā
11. kāyena manasā buddhyā  
kevalair indriyair api  
yoginaḥ karma kurvanti  
saṅgaṃ tyaktvā 'tmaśuddhaye
12. yuktaḥ karmaphalaṃ tyaktvā  
śāntim āpnoti naiṣṭhikīm  
ayuktaḥ kāmakāreṇa  
phale sakto nibadhyate
13. sarvakarmāṇi manasā  
saṃnyasyā 'ste sukhaṃ vaśi  
navadvāre pure dehi  
nai 'va kurvan na kārayan
14. na kartṛtvaṃ na karmāṇi  
lokasya sṛjati prabhuh  
na karmaphalasamṣyogaṃ  
svabhāvas tu pravartate
15. nā 'datte kasyacit pāpaṃ  
na cai 'va sukṛtaṃ vibhuh  
ajñānenā 'vṛtaṃ jñānaṃ  
tena muhyanti jantavaḥ
16. jñānena tu tad ajñānaṃ  
yeṣāṃ nāśitam ātmanaḥ  
teṣāṃ ādityavaj jñānaṃ  
prakāśayati tat param
17. tadbuddhayas tadātmānas  
tanniṣṭhās tatparāyaṇāḥ  
gacchanty apunarāvṛttiṃ  
jñānanīrdhūtakaḥkalmaṣāḥ

9. Talks, evacuates, grasps,  
Opens and shuts his eyes;  
'The senses (only) on the objects of sense  
Are operating' — holding fast to this thought.
10. Casting (all) actions upon Brahman,<sup>2</sup>  
Whoso acts abandoning attachment,  
Evil does not cleave to him,  
As water (does not cleave) to a lotus-leaf.<sup>3</sup>
11. With the body, the thought-organ, the intelligence,  
And also with the senses alone,  
Disciplined men perform action,  
Abandoning attachment, unto self-purification.
12. The disciplined man, abandoning the fruit of actions,  
Attains abiding peace;  
The undisciplined, by action due to desire,  
Attached to the fruit (of action), is bound.
13. All actions with the thought-organ  
Renouncing, he sits happily, in control,  
The embodied (soul), in the citadel of nine gates,  
Not in the least acting nor causing to act.
14. Neither agency nor actions  
Of the (people of the) world does the Lord (soul) instigate,  
Nor the conjunction of actions with their fruits;  
But inherent nature operates (in all this).
15. He does not receive (the effect of) any one's sin,  
Nor yet (of) good deeds, the Lord (soul);  
Knowledge is obscured by ignorance;  
By that creatures are deluded.
16. But if by knowledge that ignorance  
Of men's souls is destroyed,  
Their knowledge like the sun  
Illumines that Highest.
17. Their consciousness and soul fixed on that (Highest),  
With that as their final goal, supremely devoted to that,  
They go to (the state whence there is) no more return,  
Their sins destroyed by knowledge.

18. vidyāvinayasampanne  
brāhmaṇe gavi hastini  
śuni cai 'va śvapāke ca  
paṇḍitāḥ samadarśinaḥ
19. ihai 'va tair jitaḥ sargo  
yeṣāṃ sāmye sthitaṃ manaḥ  
nirdoṣaṃ hi samaṃ brahma  
tasmād brahmaṇi te sthitaḥ
20. na prahr̥ṣyet priyaṃ prāpya  
no 'dvijet prāpya cā 'priyam  
sthiraḥ buddhir asaṃmūḍho  
brahma vid brahmaṇi sthitaḥ
21. bāhyasparśeṣv asaktātmā  
vindaty ātmani yat sukham  
sa brahmayogayuktātmā  
sukham akṣayam aśnute
22. ye hi saṃsparśajā bhogā  
duḥkhayonaya eva te  
ādyantavantaḥ kaunteya  
na teṣu ramate budhaḥ
23. śaknoti 'hai 'va yaḥ soddhum  
prāk śarīravimokṣaṇāt  
kāmakrodhodbhavaṃ vegaṃ  
sa yuktaḥ sa sukhī naraḥ
24. yo 'ntaḥsukho 'ntarārāmas  
tathā 'ntarjyotir eva yaḥ  
sa yogī brahmanirvāṇaṃ  
brahmabhūto 'dhigacchati
25. labhante brahmanirvāṇaṃ  
ṛṣayaḥ kṣīṇakalmaṣāḥ  
chinnadvaidhā yatātmānaḥ  
sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ
26. kāmakrodhaviyuktānāṃ  
yatīnāṃ yatacetasāṃ  
abhito brahmanirvāṇaṃ  
vartate veditātmanām

18. In a knowledge-and-cultivation-perfected  
Brahman, a cow, an elephant,  
And in a mere dog, and an outcaste,  
The wise see the same thing.
19. Right in this world they have overcome birth,  
Whose mind is fixed in indifference;  
For Brahman is flawless and indifferent;  
Therefore they are fixed in Brahman.
20. He will not rejoice on attaining the pleasant,  
Nor repine on attaining the unpleasant;  
With stabilized mentality, unbewildered,  
Knowing Brahman, he is fixed in Brahman.
21. With self unattached to outside contacts,  
When he finds happiness in the self,  
He, his self disciplined in Brahman-discipline,  
Attains imperishable bliss.
22. For the enjoyments that spring from (outside) contacts  
Are nothing but sources of misery;  
They have beginning and end, son of Kuntī;  
The wise man takes no delight in them.
23. Who can control right in this life,  
Before being freed from the body,  
The excitement that springs from desire and wrath,  
He is disciplined, he the happy man.
24. Who finds his happiness within, his joy within,  
And likewise his light only within,  
That disciplined man to Brahman-nirvāṇa  
Goes, having become Brahman.
25. Brahman-nirvāṇa is won  
By the seers whose sins are destroyed,  
Whose doubts are cleft, whose souls are controlled,  
Who delight in the welfare of all beings.
26. To those who have put off desire and wrath,  
Religious men whose minds are controlled,  
Close at hand Brahman-nirvāṇa  
Comes, to knowers of the self.

27. sparsān kṛtvā bahir bāhyāṁś  
 cakṣuś cai 'vā 'ntare bhruvoḥ  
 prāṇāpānau samau kṛtvā  
 nāsābhyantaracāriṇau

28. yatendriyamanobuddhir  
 munir mokṣaparāyaṇaḥ  
 vigatecchābhayakrodho  
 yaḥ sadā mukta eva saḥ

29. bhoktāraṁ yajñatapasāṁ  
 sarvalokamaheśvaram  
 suhṛdaṁ sarvabhūtāṇāṁ  
 jñātvā māṁ śāntim ṛcchati

iti karmasaṁnyāsayogo nāma pañcamo 'dhyāyaḥ



27. Putting out outside contacts,  
And fixing the sight between the eye-brows,  
Making even the upper and nether breaths,  
As they pass <sup>4</sup> thru the nose;
28. Controlling the senses, thought-organ, and intelligence,  
The sage bent on final release,  
Whose desire, fear, and wrath are departed --  
Who is ever thus, is already <sup>5</sup> released.
29. The Recipient of worship and austerities,  
The Great Lord of the whole world,  
The Friend of all beings —  
Me knowing, he goes to peace.

Here ends the Fifth Chapter, called Discipline of Renunciation of Actions.

## VI

śrībhagavān uvāca

1. anāśritaḥ karmaphalaṃ  
kāryaṃ karma karoti yaḥ  
sa saṃnyāsī ca yogī ca  
na niraṅgir na cā 'kriyaḥ
2. yaṃ saṃnyāsam iti prāhur  
yogaṃ taṃ viddhi pāṇḍava  
na hy asaṃnyastasaṃkalpo  
yogī bhavati kaścana
3. āruruḥṣor muner yogaṃ  
karma kāraṇam ucyate  
yogārūḍhasya tasyai 'va  
śamaḥ kāraṇam ucyate
4. yadā hi ne 'ndriyārtheṣu  
na karmasv anuṣajjate  
sarvasaṃkalpasamnyāsī  
yogārūḍhas tado 'cyate
5. uddhared ātmanā 'tmānaṃ  
nā 'tmānam avasādayet  
ātmāi 'va hy ātmāno bandhur  
ātmāi 'va ripur ātmanaḥ
6. bandhur ātmā 'tmanas tasya  
yēnā 'tmai 'vā 'tmanā jitaḥ  
anātmanas tu śatrutve  
vartetā 'tmai 'va śatruvat
7. jitātmanaḥ praśāntasya  
paramātmā samāhitaḥ  
śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkheṣu  
tathā mānāpamānayoḥ
8. jñānavijñānatṛptātmā  
kūṭastho vijitendriyaḥ  
yukta ity ucyate yogī  
samaloṣṭāśmakāñcanaḥ

## CHAPTER VI

The Blessed One said:

1. Not interested in the fruit of action,  
Who does action that is required (by religion),  
He is the possessor of both renunciation and discipline (of action);  
Not he who builds no sacred fires and does no (ritual) acts.
2. What they call renunciation,  
Know that that is discipline (of action), son of Paṇḍu.  
For not without renouncing purpose  
Does any one become possessed of discipline.
3. For the sage that desires to mount to discipline  
Action is called the means;  
For the same man when he has mounted to discipline  
Quiescence is called the means.
4. For when not to the objects of sense  
Nor to actions is he attached,  
Renouncing all purpose,  
Then he is said to have mounted to discipline.
5. One should lift up the self by the self,  
And should not let the self down;  
For the self is the self's only friend,  
And the self is the self's only enemy.
6. The self is a friend to that self  
By which self the very self is subdued;  
But to him that does not possess the self, in enmity  
Will abide his very self, like an enemy.
7. Of the self-subdued, pacified man,  
The supreme self remains concentrated (in absorption),  
In cold and heat, pleasure and pain,  
Likewise in honor and disgrace.
8. His self satiated with theoretical and practical knowledge,<sup>1</sup>  
Immovable,<sup>2</sup> with subdued senses,  
The possessor of discipline is called (truly) disciplined,  
To whom clods, stones, and gold are all one.

9. suhṛnmitrāryudāsīna-  
madhyasthadveṣyabandhuṣu  
sādhuṣv api ca pāpeṣu  
samabuddhir viśiṣyate
10. yogī yuñjīta satatam  
ātmānaṃ rahasi sthitaḥ  
ekākī yatacittātmā  
nirāśir aparigrahaḥ
11. śucau deṣe pratiṣṭhāpya  
sthiram āsanam ātmanaḥ  
nā 'tyucchritaṃ nā 'tinīcaṃ  
cailājīnakusottaram
12. tattraī 'kāgraṃ manaḥ kṛtvā  
yatacittendriyakriyaḥ  
upaviśyā 'sane yuñjyād  
yogam ātmaviśuddhaye
13. samaṃ kāyaśirogrīvaṃ  
dhārayann acalaṃ sthiraḥ  
samprekṣya nāsikāgraṃ svaṃ  
dīśāś cā 'navalokayan
14. praśāntātmā vigatabhir  
brahmacārivrate sthitaḥ  
manaḥ samyamya macchitto  
yukta āśīta matparaḥ
15. yuñjann evaṃ sadā 'tmānaṃ  
yogī niyatamānasaḥ  
śāntiṃ nirvāṇaparamāṃ  
matsaṃsthām adhigacchati
16. nā 'tyaśnatas tu yogo 'sti  
na cai 'kāntam anaśnataḥ  
na cā 'tisvapnaśīlasya  
jāgrato nai 'va cā 'rjuna
17. yuktāhāravihārasya  
yuktaceṣṭasya karmasu  
yuktasvapnāvabodhasya  
yogo bhavati duḥkhaḥ

9. To friend, ally, foe, remote neutral,  
Holder of middle ground, object of enmity, and kinsman,  
To good and evil men alike,  
Who has the same mental attitude, is superior.
10. Let the disciplined man ever discipline  
Himself, abiding in a secret place,  
Solitary, restraining his thoughts and soul,  
Free from aspirations and without possessions.
11. In a clean place establishing  
A steady seat for himself,  
That is neither too high nor too low,  
Covered with a cloth, a skin, and kuśa-grass,
12. There fixing the thought-organ on a single object,  
Restraining the activity of his mind and senses,  
Sitting on the seat, let him practise  
Discipline unto self-purification.
13. Even<sup>3</sup> body, head, and neck  
Holding motionless, (keeping himself) steady,  
Gazing at the tip of his own nose,  
And not looking in any direction,
14. With tranquil soul, rid of fear,  
Abiding in the vow of chastity,  
Controlling the mind, his thoughts on Me,  
Let him sit disciplined, absorbed in Me.
15. Thus ever disciplining himself,  
The man of discipline, with controlled mind,  
To peace that culminates in nirvāṇa,  
And rests in Me, attains.
16. But he who eats too much has no discipline,  
Nor he who eats not at all;  
Neither he who is over-given to sleep,  
Nor yet he who is (ever) wakeful, Arjuna.
17. Who is disciplined (moderate) in food and recreation,  
And has disciplined activity in works,  
And is disciplined in both sleep and wakefulness,  
To him belongs discipline that bans misery.

18. yadā viniyatam cittam  
 ātmany evā 'vatiṣṭhate  
 niḥspṛhaḥ sarvakāmebhyo  
 yukta ity ucyate tadā
19. yathā dīpo nivātaṣṭho  
 ne 'ṅgate so 'pamā smṛtā  
 yogino yatacittasya  
 yuñjato yogam ātmanaḥ
20. yatro 'paramate cittam  
 niruddham yogasevayā  
 yatra cai 'vā 'tmanā 'tmānam  
 paśyann ātmani tuṣyati
21. sukham ātyantikam yat tad  
 buddhigrāhyam atīndriyam  
 veti yatra na cai 'vā 'yam  
 sthitaś calati tattvataḥ
22. yaṁ labdhvā cā 'param lābham  
 manyate nā 'dhikam tataḥ  
 yasmin sthito na duḥkhena  
 guruṇā 'pi vicālyate
23. tam vidyād duḥkhasamyoga-  
 viyogam yogasamjñitam  
 sa niścayena yoktavyo  
 yogo 'nirvinṇacetasā
24. saṁkalpaprabhāvān kāmāms  
 tyaktvā sarvān aśeṣataḥ  
 manasai 've 'ndriyagrāmam  
 viniyama samantataḥ
25. śanaiḥ-śanair uparamed  
 buddhyā dhṛtiḥṛitayā  
 ātmasamsthām manaḥ kṛtvā  
 na kiṁcid api cintayet
26. yato-yato niścaraṭi  
 manaś cañcalam asthiram  
 tatas-tato niyamyai 'tad  
 ātmany eva vaśam nayet

18. When the thought, controlled,  
Settles on the self alone,  
The man free from longing for all desires  
Is then called disciplined.
19. As a lamp stationed in a windless place  
Flickers not, this image is recorded  
Of the disciplined man controlled in thought,  
Practising discipline of the self.
20. When the thought comes to rest,  
Checked by the practice of discipline,  
And when, the self by the self  
Contemplating, he finds satisfaction in the self;
21. That supernal bliss which  
Is to be grasped by the consciousness and is beyond the senses,  
When he knows this, and not in the least  
Swerves from the truth, abiding fixed (in it);
22. And which having gained, other gain  
He counts none higher than it;  
In which established, by no misery,  
However grievous, is he moved;
23. This (state), let him know, — from conjunction with misery  
The disjunction, — is known as discipline;  
With determination must be practised this  
Discipline, with heart undismayed.
24. The desires that spring from purposes  
Abandoning, all without remainder,  
With the thought-organ alone the throng of senses  
Restraining altogether,
25. Little by little let him come to rest  
Thru the consciousness, held with firmness;  
Keeping the thought-organ fixed in the self,  
He should think on nothing at all.
26. Because of whatsoever thing <sup>4</sup> strays  
The thought-organ, fickle and unstable,  
From every such thing holding it back,  
He shall bring it into control in the self alone.

27. praśāntamanasaṃ hy enaṃ  
yoginaṃ sukhaṃ uttamam  
upaiti śāntarajasam  
brahmabhūtam akalmaṣam
28. yuñjann evaṃ sadā 'tmānaṃ  
yogī vigatakalmaṣaḥ  
sukhena brahmasaṃsparśam  
atyantaṃ sukhaṃ aśnute
29. sarvabhūtastham ātmānaṃ  
sarvabhūtāni cā 'tmani  
īkṣate yogayuktātmā  
sarvatra samadarśanaḥ
30. yo mām paśyati sarvatra  
sarvaṃ ca mayi paśyati  
tasyā 'haṃ na praṇaśyāmi  
sa ca me na praṇaśyati
31. sarvabhūtasthitaṃ yo mām  
bhajaty ekatvam āsthitaḥ  
sarvathā vartamāno 'pi  
sa yogī mayi vartate
32. ātmaupamyena sarvatra  
samaṃ paśyati yo 'rjuna  
sukhaṃ vā yadi vā duḥkhaṃ  
sa yogī paramo mataḥ  
arjuna uvāca .
33. yo 'yaṃ yogas tvayā proktaḥ  
sāmyena madhusūdana  
etasyā 'haṃ na paśyāmi  
cañcalatvāt sthitiṃ sthirām
34. cañcalaṃ hi manaḥ kṛṣṇa  
pramāthi balavad dṛḍham  
tasyā 'haṃ nigrahaṃ manye  
vāyor iva suduṣkaram  
śrībhagavān uvāca
35. asaṃśayaṃ mahābāho  
mano durnigrahaṃ calam  
abhyāseṇa tu kaunteya  
vairāgyeṇa ca grhyate



27. For to him when his thought-organ is tranquil,  
 To the disciplined one, supreme bliss  
 Approaches, his passion stilled,  
 Become (one with) Brahman, stainless.
28. Thus ever disciplining himself,  
 The disciplined man, free from stain,  
 Easily to contact with Brahman,<sup>5</sup>  
 To endless bliss, attains.
29. Himself <sup>6</sup> as in all beings,  
 And all beings in himself,  
 Sees he whose self is disciplined in discipline,  
 Who sees the same in all things.
30. Who sees Me in all,  
 And sees all in Me,  
 For him I am not lost,  
 And he is not lost for Me.
31. Me as abiding in all beings whoso  
 Reveres, adopting (the belief in) one-ness,  
 Who abiding in any possible condition,  
 That disciplined man abides in Me.
32. By comparison with himself, in all (beings)  
 Whoso sees the same, Arjuna,  
 Whether it be pleasure or pain,<sup>7</sup>  
 He is deemed the supreme disciplined man.
- Arjuna said:
33. This discipline which by Thee has been explained  
 As indifference,<sup>8</sup> Slayer of Madhu,  
 Thereof I do not see  
 Any permanent establishment, because of (man's) fickleness.
34. For fickle is the thought-organ, Kṛṣṇa,  
 Impetuous, mighty, and hard;  
 The restraining of it, I conceive,  
 Is very difficult, as of the wind.
- The Blessed One said:
35. Without doubt, great-armed one,  
 The thought-organ is hard to control, and fickle;  
 But by practice, son of Kuntī,  
 And by ascetic aversion, it may be controlled.

36. asaṃyatātmanā yogo  
 duṣprāpa iti me matiḥ  
 vaśyātmanā tu yatatā  
 śakyo 'vāptum upāyataḥ  
 arjuna uvāca
37. ayatiḥ śraddhayo 'peto  
 yogāc calitamānasah  
 aprāpya yogasaṃsiddhiṃ  
 kām gatiṃ kṛṣṇa gacchati
38. kaccin no 'bhayavibhraṣṭas  
 chinnābhram iva naśyati  
 apratiṣṭho mahābāho  
 vimūḍho brahmaṇaḥ pathi
39. etan me saṃśayaṃ kṛṣṇa  
 chettum arhasy aśeṣataḥ  
 tvadanyaḥ saṃśayasyā 'sya  
 chettā na hy upapadyate  
 śrībhagavān uvāca
40. pārtha nai 've 'ha nā 'mutra  
 vināśas tasya vidyate  
 na hi kalyāṇakṛt kaścid  
 durgatiṃ tāta gacchati
41. prāpya puṇyakṛtām lokān  
 uṣitvā śāśvatīḥ samāḥ  
 śucinām śrīmatām gehe  
 yogabhraṣṭo 'bhijāyate
42. athavā yoginām eva  
 kule bhavati dhīmatām  
 etad dhi durlabhataraṃ  
 loke janma yad īdṛśam
43. tatra taṃ buddhisamyogaṃ  
 labhate paurvadehikam  
 yatate ca tato bhūyaḥ  
 saṃsiddhau kurunandana
44. pūrvābhyāsenā tenai 'va  
 hriyate hy avaśo 'pi saḥ  
 jijñāsuraḥ pi yogasya  
 śabdabrahmā 'tivartate

36. For one not self-controlled, discipline  
Is hard to reach, I believe;  
But by the self-controlled man who strives  
It may be attained thru the proper method.

Arjuna said:

37. An unsuccessful striver who is endowed with faith,  
Whose mind falls away from discipline  
Without attaining perfection of discipline,  
To what goal does he go, Kṛṣṇa?
38. Fallen from both, does he not  
Perish like a cloven cloud,  
Having no (religious) foundation, great-armed one,  
Gone astray on Brahman's path?
39. This matter,<sup>9</sup> my doubt, O Kṛṣṇa,  
Be pleased to cleave without remainder;  
Other than Thee, of this doubt  
No cleaver, surely, can be found.

The Blessed One said:

40. Son of Pṛthā, neither in this world nor in the next  
Does any destruction of him occur.  
For no doer of the right  
Comes to a bad end, my friend.
41. Attaining the heavenly worlds of the doers of right,  
Dwelling there for endless years,  
In the house of pure and illustrious folk  
One that has fallen from discipline is born.
42. Or else of possessors of discipline, rather,  
Enlightened folk, in their family he comes into existence;  
For this is yet harder to attain,  
Such a birth as that in the world.
43. There that association of mentality  
He obtains, which was his in his former body;  
And he strives from that point onward  
Unto perfection, son of Kuru.
44. For by that same former practice  
He is carried on even without his wish.  
Even one who (merely) wishes to know discipline  
Transcends the word-Brahman (the Vedic religion).

45. prayatnād yatamānas tu  
 yogī saṁśuddhakilbiṣaḥ  
 anekaajanmasaṁsiddhas  
 tato yāti parām gatim
46. tapasvibhyo 'dhiko yogī  
 jñānibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikaḥ  
 karmibhyaś cā 'dhiko yogī  
 tasmād yogī bhavā 'rjuna
47. yoginām api sarveṣāṃ  
 madgatenā 'ntarātmanā  
 śraddhāvān bhajate yo māṃ  
 sa me yuktatamo mataḥ  
 iti dhyānayogo nāma ṣaṣṭho 'dhyāyaḥ

45. But striving zealously,  
With sins cleansed, the disciplined man,  
Perfected thru many rebirths,  
Then (finally) goes to the highest goal.
46. The man of discipline is higher than men of austerities,  
Also than men of knowledge he is held to be higher;  
And the man of discipline is higher than men of ritual action;  
Therefore be a man of discipline, Arjuna.
47. Of all men of discipline, moreover,  
With inner soul gone to Me  
Whoso reveres Me with faith,  
Him I hold the most disciplined.

Here ends the Sixth Chapter, called Discipline of Meditation.

## VII

śrībhagavān uvāca

1. mayy āsaktamanāḥ pārtha  
yogaṃ yuñjan madāśrayaḥ  
asaṃśayaṃ samagraṃ māṃ  
yathā jñāsyasi tac chrṇu
2. jñānaṃ te 'haṃ savijñānam  
idaṃ vakṣyāmy aśeṣataḥ  
yaj jñātvā ne 'ha bhūyo 'nyaj  
jñātavyam avaśiṣyate
3. manuṣyāṇāṃ sahasreṣu  
kaścīd yatati siddhaye  
yatatām api siddhānāṃ  
kaścin māṃ vetti tattvataḥ
4. bhūmir āpo 'nalo vāyuḥ  
khaṃ mano buddhir eva ca  
ahaṃkāra itī 'yaṃ me  
bhinnā prakṛtir aṣṭadhā
5. apare 'yam itas tv anyāṃ  
prakṛtiṃ viddhi me parāṃ  
jīva bhūtāṃ mahābāho  
yaye 'daṃ dhāryate jagat
6. etadyonīni bhūtāni  
sarvāṇi 'ty upadhāraya  
ahaṃ kṛtsnasya jagataḥ  
prabhavaḥ pralayas tathā
7. mattaḥ parataraṃ nā 'nyat  
kiṃcid asti dhanamjaya  
mayi sarvam idaṃ protaṃ  
sūtre maṇigaṇā iva
8. raso 'haṃ apsu kaunteya  
prabhā 'smi śaśisūryayoḥ  
praṇavaḥ sarvavedeṣu  
śabdaḥ khe pauruṣaṃ nr̥ṣu

## CHAPTER VII

The Blessed One said:

1. With mind attached to Me, son of Prthā,  
Practising discipline with reliance on Me,  
Without doubt Me entirely  
How thou shalt know, that hear!
2. Theoretical knowledge to thee along with practical <sup>1</sup>  
I shall now expound completely;  
Having known which, in this world no other further  
Thing to be known is left.
3. Among thousands of men  
Perchance one strives for perfection;  
Even of those that strive and are perfected,  
Perchance one knows Me in very truth.
4. Earth, water, fire, wind,  
Ether, thought-organ, and consciousness,  
And I-faculty: thus My  
Nature is divided eight-fold.
5. This is My lower (nature). But other than this,  
My higher nature know:  
It is the Life (soul), great-armed one,  
By which this world is maintained.
6. Beings spring from it,<sup>2</sup>  
All of them, be assured.  
Of the whole world I am  
The origin and the dissolution too.
7. Than Me no other higher thing  
Whatsoever exists, Dhanamjaya;  
On Me all this (universe) is strung,  
Like heaps of pearls on a string.
8. I am taste in water, son of Kuntī,  
I am light in the moon and sun,  
The sacred syllable (*om*) in all the Vedas,  
Sound in ether, manliness in men.

9. puṇyo gandhaḥ pṛthivyām ca  
tejaś cā 'smi vibhāvasau  
jīvanam sarvabhūteṣu  
tapaś cā 'smi tapasviṣu
10. bījaṁ mām sarvabhūtānām  
viddhi pārtha sanātanam  
buddhir buddhimatām asmi  
tejas tejasvinām aham
11. balaṁ balavatām cā 'haṁ  
kāmarāgavivarjitam  
dharmāvīruddho bhūteṣu  
kāmo 'smi bharatarṣabha
12. ye cai 'va sāttvikā bhāvā  
rājasās tāmasās ca ye  
matta eve 'ti tām viddhi  
na tv ahaṁ teṣu te mayi
13. tribhir guṇamayair bhāvair  
ebhiḥ sarvam idaṁ jagat  
mohitaṁ nā 'bhijānāti  
mām ebhyaḥ param avyayam
14. daivī hy eṣā guṇamayī  
mama māyā duratyayā  
mām eva ye prapadyante  
māyām etām taranti te
15. na mām duṣkṛtino mūḍhāḥ  
prapadyante narādhamāḥ  
māyayā 'pahṛtajñānā  
āsuram bhāvam āśritāḥ
16. caturvidhā bhajante mām  
janāḥ sukṛtino 'rjuna  
ārto jijñāsura arthārthī  
jñānī ca bharatarṣabha
17. teṣāṁ jñānī nityayukta  
ekabhaktir viśiṣyate  
priyo hi jñānino 'tyartham  
ahaṁ sa ca mama priyaḥ



9. Both the goodly odor in earth,  
And brilliance in fire am I,  
Life in all beings,  
And austerity in ascetics am I.
10. The seed of all beings am I,  
The eternal, be assured, son of Pṛthā;  
I am intelligence of the intelligent,  
Majesty of the majestic am I.
11. Might of the mighty am I, too,  
(Such as is) free from desire and passion;  
(So far as it is) not inconsistent with right, in creatures  
I am desire, O best of Bharatas.
12. Both whatsoever states are of (the Strand) goodness,  
And those of (the Strands) passion and darkness too,  
Know that they are from Me alone;  
But I am not in them; they are in Me.
13. By the three states (of being), composed of the Strands,  
These (just named), all this world,  
Deluded, does not recognize  
Me that am higher than they and eternal.
14. For this is My divine strand-composed  
Trick-of-illusion, hard to get past;  
Those who resort to Me alone  
Penetrate beyond this trick-of-illusion.
15. Not to Me do deluded evil-doers  
Resort, base men,  
Whom this illusion robs of knowledge,  
Who cleave to demoniac estate.
16. Fourfold are those that worship Me,  
(All) virtuous folk, Arjuna:  
The afflicted, the knowledge-seeker, he who seeks personal ends,<sup>3</sup>  
And the possessor of knowledge, bull of Bharatas.
17. Of these the possessor of knowledge, constantly disciplined,  
Of single devotion, is the best;  
For extremely dear to the possessor of knowledge  
Am I, and he is dear to Me.

18. udārāḥ sarva evai 'te  
 jñānī tv ātmai 'va me matam  
 āsthitaḥ sa hi yuktātmā  
 mām evā 'nuttamāṃ gatim
19. bahūnāṃ janmanām ante  
 jñānavān māṃ prapadyate  
 vāsudevaḥ sarvam iti  
 sa mahātmā sudurlabhaḥ
20. kāmāis tais-tair hr̥tajñānāḥ  
 prapadyante 'nyadevatāḥ  
 taṃ-taṃ niyamam āsthāya  
 prakṛtyā niyatāḥ svayā
21. yo-yo yām-yām tanuṃ bhaktaḥ  
 śraddhayā 'rcitum icchati  
 tasya-tasyā 'calāṃ śraddhāṃ  
 tām eva vidadhāmy aham
22. sa tayā śraddhayā yuktaḥ  
 tasyā 'rādhanam ihate  
 labhate ca tataḥ kāmān  
 mayai 'va vihitān hi tām
23. antavat tu phalaṃ teṣāṃ  
 tad bhavaty alpamedhasām  
 devān devayajo yānti  
 madbhaktā yānti mām api
24. avyaktaṃ vyaktim āpannam  
 manyante mām abuddhayaḥ  
 paraṃ bhāvam ajānanto  
 māmā 'vyayam anuttamam
25. nā 'haṃ prakāśaḥ sarvasya  
 yogamāyāsamāvṛtaḥ  
 mūḍho 'yaṃ nā 'bhijānāti  
 loko mām ajam avyayam
26. vedā 'haṃ samatītāni  
 vartamānāni cā 'rjuna  
 bhaviṣyāṇi ca bhūtāni  
 māṃ tu veda na kaścana

18. All these are noble;  
But the man of knowledge is My very self, so I hold.  
For he with disciplined soul has resorted  
To Me alone as the highest goal.
19. At the end of many births  
The man of knowledge resorts to Me;  
Who thinks 'Vāsudeva (Kṛṣṇa) is all,'  
That noble soul is hard to find.
20. Deprived of knowledge by this or that desire,  
Men resort to other deities,  
Taking to this or that (religious) rule,  
Constrained by their own nature.
21. Whatsoever (divine) form any devotee  
With faith seeks to worship,  
For every such (devotee), faith unswerving  
I ordain that same to be.
22. He, disciplined with that faith,  
Seeks to propitiate that (divine being),<sup>4</sup>  
And obtains therefrom his desires,  
Because I myself ordain them.
23. But finite fruition for them  
That becomes, (since) they are of scant intelligence;  
The worshipers of the gods go to the gods,  
My devotees go to Me also.
24. Unmanifest, as having come into manifestation  
Fools conceive Me,  
Not knowing the higher essence  
Of Me, which is imperishable, supreme.<sup>5</sup>
25. I am not revealed to every one,  
Being veiled by My magic trick-of-illusion;  
'Tis deluded and does not recognize  
Me the unborn, imperishable, — this world.
26. I know those that are past,  
And that are present, Arjuna,  
And beings that are yet to be,  
But no one knows Me.

27. icchādveṣasamutthena  
 dvandvamohena bhārata  
 sarvabhūtāni saṁmohaṁ  
 sarge yānti paraṁtapa
28. yeṣāṁ tv antagataṁ pāpaṁ  
 janānāṁ puṇyakarmaṇām  
 te dvandvamohanirmuktā  
 bhajante mām dṛḍhavrataḥ
29. jarāmaraṇamokṣāya  
 mām āśritya yatanti ye  
 te brahma tad viduḥ kṛtsnam  
 adhyātmāṁ karma cā 'khilam
30. sādhibhūtādhidaivaṁ mām  
 sādhiyajñaṁ ca ye viduḥ  
 prayāṇakāle 'pi ca mām  
 te vidur yuktacetasaḥ
- iti jñānavijñānayogo nāma saptamo 'dhyāyaḥ

27. It arises from desire and loathing,  
 The delusion of the pairs (of opposites), son of Bha.ata;  
 Because of it all beings to confusion  
 Are subject at their birth, scorcher of the foe.
28. But those whose sin is ended,  
 Men of virtuous deeds,  
 Freed from the delusion of the pairs,  
 Revere Me with firm resolve.
29. Unto freedom from old age and death  
 Those who strive, relying on Me,  
 They know that Brahman entire,  
 And the over-soul, and action altogether.<sup>6</sup>
30. Me together with the over-being and the over-divinity,  
 And with the over-worship, whoso know,  
 And (who know) Me even at the hour of death,  
 They (truly) know (Me), with disciplined hearts.

Here ends the Seventh Chapter, called Discipline of Theoretical and Practical Knowledge.

## VIII

arjuna uvāca

1. kiṃ tad brahma kim adhyātmam  
kim karma puruṣottama  
adhibhūtam ca kiṃ proktam  
adhidaivam kim ucyate

2. adhiyajñaḥ katham ko 'tra  
dehe 'smin madhusūdana  
prayānakāle ca katham  
jñeyo 'si niyatātmabhīḥ

śrībhagavān uvāca

3. akṣaram brahma paramam  
svabhāvo 'dhyātmam ucyate  
bhūtabhāvodbhavadakaro  
visargaḥ karmasaṃjñitah

4. adhibhūtam kṣaro bhāvaḥ  
puruṣaś cā 'dhidaivatam  
adhiyajño 'ham evā 'tra  
dehe dehabhṛtām vara

5. antakāle ca mām eva  
smaran muktvā kalevaram  
yaḥ prayāti sa madbhāvaṃ  
yāti nā 'sty atra saṃśayaḥ

6. yaṃ-yaṃ vā 'pi smaran bhāvaṃ  
tyajaty ante kalevaram  
taṃ-tam evai 'ti kaunteya  
sadā tadbhāvabhāvitaḥ

7. tasmāt sarveṣu kāleṣu  
mām anusmara yudhya ca  
mayy arpitamanobuddhir  
mām evai 'śyasy asaṃśayaḥ

8. abhyāsayogayuktena  
cetasā nā 'nyagāminā  
paramam puruṣam divyaṃ  
yāti pārthā 'nucintavan

## CHAPTER VIII

Arjuna said:

1. What is that Brahman, what the over-soul,  
What is action, O best of men,  
And what is called the over-being,  
What is said to be the over-divinity?
2. How and what is the over-worship here  
In this body, Slayer of Madhu?  
And how at the hour of death  
Art Thou to be known by men of self-control?

The Blessed One said:

3. Brahman is the supreme imperishable;  
The over-soul is called innate nature;<sup>1</sup>  
That which causes the origin of states of beings,  
The creative force, is known as action.<sup>2</sup>
4. The over-being is the perishable condition (of being),<sup>3</sup>  
And the spirit <sup>4</sup> is the over-divinity;  
The over-worship am I myself,<sup>5</sup> here  
In the body, O best of embodied ones.
5. And at the hour of death, on Me alone  
Meditating, leaving the body  
Whoso dies, to My estate he  
Goes; there is no doubt of that.
6. Whatsoever state (of being) meditating upon  
He leaves the body at death,  
To just that he goes, son of Kuntī,  
Always, being made to be in the condition of that.
7. Therefore at all times  
Think on Me, and fight;  
With thought-organ and consciousness fixed on Me  
Thou shalt go just to Me without a doubt.
8. If disciplined in the discipline of practice  
Be one's mind, straying to no other object,  
To the supreme divine Spirit  
He goes, son of Pṛthā, meditating thereon.

9. kavim purāṇam anuśāsītāram  
aṇor aṇīyāṃsam anusmared yaḥ  
sarvasya dhātāram acintyarūpam  
ādityavarṇam tamasah parastāt
10. prayāṇakāle manasā 'calena  
bhaktyā yukto yogabalena cai 'va  
bhruvor madhye prāṇam āveśya samyak  
sa taṁ param puruṣam upaiti divyam
11. yad akṣaram vedavido vadanti  
viśanti yad yatayo vitarāgāḥ  
yad icchanto brahmacaryaṁ caranti  
tat te padaṁ saṁgrahaṇa pravakṣye
12. sarvadvārāṇi samyamya  
mano hṛdi nirudhya ca  
mūrdhny ādhāyā 'tmanaḥ prāṇam  
āsthito yogadhāraṇām
13. om ity ekākṣaram brahma  
vyāharan mām anusmaran  
yaḥ prayāti tyajan dehaṁ  
sa yāti paramāṁ gatim
14. ananyacetāḥ satataṁ  
yo mām smarati nityaśah  
tasyā 'haṁ sulabhaḥ pārtha  
nityayuktasya yoginaḥ
15. mām upetya punarjanma  
duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam  
nā 'pnuvanti mahātmānaḥ  
saṁsiddhiṁ paramāṁ gatāḥ
16. ā brahmabhuvanāl lokāḥ  
punarāvartino 'rjuna  
mām upetya tu kaunteya  
punarjanma na vidyate
17. sahasrayugaparyantam  
ahar yad brahmaṇo viduḥ  
rātriṁ yugasahasrāntāṁ  
te 'horātravido janāḥ



9. The ancient seer, the governor,  
Finer than an atom — who meditates on Him,  
The establisher of all, of unthinkable form,  
Sun-colored, beyond darkness,
10. At the time of death with unswerving thought,  
Disciplined with devotion and the power of discipline,  
Making the breath to enter altogether between the eye-brows,  
He goes to that supreme divine Spirit.
11. Which Veda-knowers call the imperishable,  
Which ascetics free from passion enter,  
Seeking which men live the life of chastity,  
That place I shall declare to thee in brief.
12. Restraining all the gates (of the body),  
And confining the thought-organ in the heart,  
Fixing his own breath in his head,  
Resorting to fixation of discipline,
13. The single-syllable Brahman (which is) *om*  
Pronouncing, and meditating on Me,  
Who departs, leaving the body,  
He goes to the highest goal.
14. With thoughts ever straying to no other object,  
Who thinks on Me constantly,  
For him I am easy to gain, son of Prthā,  
For the ever-disciplined possessor of discipline.
15. Having come to Me, rebirth,  
Which is the home of misery and impermanent,  
Do not attain the great-souled men  
That have gone to supreme perfection.
16. As far as the world of (the personal god) Brahman, the worlds  
Are subject to recurring existences, Arjuna;  
But having come to Me, son of Kuntī,  
No rebirth is found.
17. As compassing a thousand world-ages  
When they know the day of Brahman,  
And the night (of Brahman) as compassing a thousand ages,  
Those folk know what day and night are.

18. avyaktād vyaktayaḥ sarvāḥ  
prabhavanty aharāgame  
rātryāgame praliyante  
tatrai 'vā 'vyaktasamjñake
19. bhūtagrāmaḥ sa evā 'yaṁ  
bhūtvā-bhūtvā praliyate  
rātryāgame 'vaśaḥ pārtha  
prabhavaty aharāgame
20. paras tasmāt tu bhāvo 'nyo  
'vyakto 'vyaktāt sanātanaḥ  
yaḥ sa sarveṣu bhūteṣu  
naśyatsu na vinaśyati
21. avyakto 'kṣara ity uktas  
tam āhuḥ paramāṁ gatim  
yaṁ prāpya na nivartante  
tad dhāma paramaṁ mama
22. puruṣaḥ sa paraḥ pārtha  
bhaktyā labhyas tv ananyayā  
yasyā 'ntaḥsthāni bhūtāni  
yena sarvam idaṁ tatam
23. yatra kāle tv anāvṛttim  
āvṛttim cai 'va yoginaḥ  
prayātā yānti taṁ kālam  
vakṣyāmi bharatarṣabha
24. agnir jyotir ahaḥ śuklaḥ  
ṣaṇmāsā uttarāyaṇam  
tatra prayātā gacchanti  
brahma brahmavido janāḥ
25. dhūmo rātris tathā kṛṣṇaḥ  
ṣaṇmāsā dakṣiṇāyaṇam  
tatra cāndramasaṁ jyotir  
yogī prāpya nivartate
26. śuklakṛṣṇe gati hy ete  
jagataḥ śāśvate mate  
ekayā yāty' anāvṛttim  
anyayā 'vartate punaḥ

18. From the unmanifest all manifestations  
Come forth at the coming of (Brahman's) day,  
And dissolve at the coming of night,  
In that same one, known as the unmanifest.
19. This very same host of beings,  
Coming into existence over and over, is dissolved  
At the approach of night, willy-nilly, son of Pṛthā,  
And comes forth at the approach of day.
20. But higher than that is another state of being,  
Unmanifest, (higher) than (that) unmanifest, eternal,  
Which when all beings  
Perish, perishes not.
21. (This) unmanifest is called the indestructible;  
It they call the highest goal,  
Attaining which they return not;  
That is My highest station.<sup>6</sup>
22. This is the supreme Spirit, son of Pṛthā,  
I'o be won, however, by unswerving devotion;  
Within which (all) beings are fixed,  
By which this universe is pervaded.
23. But at what times to non-return,  
And (when) to return, disciplined men  
Dying depart, those times  
I shall declare, bull of Bharatas.<sup>7</sup>
24. Fire, light, day, the bright (lunar fortnight),  
The six months that are the northward course of the sun,  
Dying in these, go  
To Brahman Brahman-knowing folk.
25. Smoke, night, also the dark (lunar fortnight),  
The six months that are the southward course of the sun,  
In these (when he dies) to the moon's light  
Attaining, the disciplined man returns.
26. For these two paths, light and dark,  
Are held to be eternal for the world;  
By one, man goes to non-return,  
By the other he returns again.

27. nai 'te sṛtī pārtha jñāna  
 yogī muhyati kaścana  
 tasmāt sarveṣu kālēṣu  
 yogayukto bhavā 'rjuna
28. vedeṣu yajñeṣu tapaḥsu cai 'va  
 dāneṣu yat puṇyaphalaṃ pradiṣṭam  
 atyeti tat sarvaṃ idaṃ viditvā  
 yogī paraṃ sthānam upaiti cā 'dyam  
 ity akṣarabrahmayogo nāmā 'ṣṭamo 'dhyāyaḥ

27. Knowing these two paths, son of Pṛthā, not  
Is any disciplined man confused.  
Therefore at all times  
Be disciplined in discipline, Arjuna.

28. In the Vedas, in acts of worship, and in austerities,  
In alms-gifts, what fruit of merit is ordained,  
All that surpasses he who knows this,  
The man of discipline, and goes to the highest primal place.

Here ends the Eighth Chapter, called Discipline of the Imperishable  
Brahman.

## IX

śrībhagavān uvāca

1. idaṃ tu te guhyatamaṃ  
pravakṣyāmy anasūyave  
jñānaṃ vijñānasahitaṃ  
yaj jñātvā mokṣyase 'śubhāt
2. rājavidyā rājaguhyam  
pavitram idaṃ uttamam  
pratyakṣāvagamaṃ dharmyam  
susukham kartum avyayam
3. aśraddadhānāḥ puruṣā  
dharmasyā 'sya paramtapa  
aprāpya mām nivartante  
mṛtyusaṃsāravartmani
4. mayā tatam idaṃ sarvaṃ  
jagad avyaktamūrtinā  
matsthāni sarvabhūtāni  
na cā 'haṃ teṣv avasthitaḥ
5. na ca matsthāni bhūtāni  
paśya me yogam aiśvaram  
bhūtabhṛn na ca bhūtastho  
mamā 'tmā bhūtabhāvanaḥ
6. yathā 'kāśasthito nityam  
vāyuḥ sarvatrago mahān  
tathā sarvāṇi bhūtāni  
matsthāni 'ty upadhāraya
7. sarvabhūtāni kaunteya  
prakṛtiṃ yānti māmikām  
kalpakṣaye punas tāni  
kalpādaḥ visṛjāmy aham
8. prakṛtiṃ svām avaṣṭabhya  
visṛjāmi punaḥ-punaḥ  
bhūtagrāmam imaṃ kṛtsnam  
avaśaṃ prakṛter vaśāt

## CHAPTER IX

The Blessed One said:

1. But this most secret thing to thee  
I shall declare, since thou cavillest not,  
This theoretical knowledge joined with practical,<sup>1</sup>  
Knowing which thou shalt be freed from evil.
2. A royal science, a royal mystery,  
A supreme purifier is this,  
Immediately comprehensible, righteous,  
Easy to carry out, imperishable.
3. Men who put no faith  
In this religious truth, scorcher of the foe,  
Do not attain Me, and return  
On the path of the endless round of deaths.
4. By Me is pervaded all this  
Universe, by Me in the form of the unmanifest.  
All beings rest in Me,  
And I do not rest in them.
5. And (yet) beings do not rest in Me:  
Behold My divine mystery (or magic)!  
Supporter of beings, and not resting in beings,  
Is My Self, that causes beings to be.
6. As constantly abides in the ether  
The great wind, that penetrates everywhere,  
So all beings  
Abide in Me; make sure of that.
7. All beings, son of Kuntī,  
Pass into My material nature  
At the end of a world-eon; them again  
I send forth at the beginning of a (new) world-eon.
8. Taking as base My own material-nature  
I send forth again and again  
This whole host of beings,  
Which is powerless, by the power of (My) material nature.

9. na ca māṃ tāni karmāṇi  
nibadhnanti dhanamjaya  
udāsīnavad āsīnam  
asaktaṃ teṣu karmasu
10. mayā 'dhyakṣeṇa prakṛtiḥ  
sūyate sacarācaram  
hetunā 'nena kaunteya  
jagad viparivartate
11. avajānanti māṃ mūḍhā  
mānuṣiṃ tanum āśritam  
paraṃ bhāvam ajānanto  
mama bhūtamahesvaram
12. moghāśā moghakarmāṇo  
moghajñānā vicetasah  
rākṣasīm āsurīm ca 'va  
prakṛtiṃ mohiniṃ śritāḥ
13. mahātmānas tu māṃ pārtha  
daivīm prakṛtim āśritāḥ  
bhajanty ananyamanaso  
jñātvā bhūtādim avyayam
14. satataṃ kīrtayanto māṃ  
yatantaś ca dṛḍhavrataḥ  
namasyantaś ca māṃ bhaktyā  
nityayuktā upāsate
15. jñānayaज्ञेना ca 'py anye  
yajanto mām upāsate  
ekatvena pṛthaktvena  
bahudhā viśvatomukham
16. ahaṃ kratuṛ ahaṃ yajñah  
svadhā 'ham ahaṃ auśadham  
mantro 'ham ahaṃ evā 'jyam  
ahaṃ agniṛ ahaṃ hutam
17. pitā 'ham asya jagato  
mātā dhātā pitāmahaḥ  
vedyaṃ pavitraṃ omkāra  
ṛk sāma yajur eva ca



9. And Me these actions do not  
Bind, Dhanamjaya, —  
Sitting in as one sitting out (participating as one indifferent),  
Unattached to these actions.
10. With Me as overseer, material nature  
Brings forth (the world of) moving and unmoving (beings);  
By this motive-force, son of Kuntī,  
The world goes around.
11. Fools despise Me  
That have assumed human form,  
Not knowing the higher state  
Of Me, which is the great lord of beings.
12. They are of vain aspirations, of vain actions,  
Of vain knowledge, bereft of insight;  
In ogriśh and demoniac  
Nature, which is delusive, they abide.
13. But 'tis Me, son of Pṛthā, that great-souled men,  
Abiding in god-like nature,  
Revere with unswerving thoughts,  
Knowing (Me as) the beginning of beings, the imperishable.
14. Ever glorifying Me,  
And striving with firm resolve,  
And paying homage to Me with devotion,  
Constantly disciplined, they wait upon Me.
15. With knowledge-worship also others  
Worshiping wait upon Me,  
In My unique and manifold forms,  
(Me as) variously (manifested), facing in all directions.
16. I am the ritual act, I am the act of worship,  
I am the offering to the dead, I am the medicinal herb,  
I am the sacred formula, I alone am the sacrificial butter,  
I am the fire of offering, I am the poured oblation.
17. I am the father of this world,  
The mother, the establisher, the grandsire,  
The object of knowledge, the purifier, the sacred syllable *om*,  
The verse of praise, the chant, and the sacrificial formula;

18. gatiṃ bhartā prabhuḥ sākṣī  
 nivāsaḥ śaraṇaṃ suhṛt  
 prabhavaḥ pralayaḥ sthānaṃ  
 nidhānaṃ bījaṃ avyayaṃ
19. tapāmy ahaṃ ahaṃ varṣaṃ  
 nigrhṇāmy utsrjāmi ca  
 amṛtaṃ ca 'va mṛtyuś ca  
 sad asac cā 'haṃ arjuna
20. traividyaṃ mām somapāḥ pūtapāpā  
 yajñair iṣṭvā svargatiṃ prārthayante  
 te puṇyaṃ āśādyā surendralokam  
 aśnanti divyān divi devabhogān
21. te taṃ bhuktvā svargalokaṃ viśālaṃ  
 kṣīṇe puṇye martyalokaṃ viśanti  
 evaṃ trayīdharmam anuprapannā  
 gatāgataṃ kāmakāmā labhante
22. ananyāś cintayanto mām  
 ye janāḥ paryupāsate  
 teṣāṃ nityābhiyuktānāṃ  
 yogakṣemaṃ vahāmy ahaṃ
23. ye 'py anyadevatābhaktā  
 yajante śraddhayā 'nviṭāḥ  
 te 'pi mām eva kaunteya  
 yajanty avidhipūrvakam
24. ahaṃ hi sarvayajñānāṃ  
 bhoktā ca prabhur eva ca  
 na tu mām abhijānanti  
 tattvenā 'taś cyavanti te
25. yānti devavratā devān  
 pitṛṇ yānti pitṛvratāḥ  
 bhūtāni yānti bhūtejyā  
 yānti madyājino 'pi mām
26. pattraṃ puṣpaṃ phalaṃ toyam  
 yo me bhaktyā prayacchati  
 tad ahaṃ bhaktyupahṛtam  
 aśnāmi prayatātmanaḥ

18. The goal, supporter, lord, witness,  
The dwelling-place, refuge, friend,  
The origin, dissolution, and maintenance,  
The treasure-house, the imperishable seed.
19. I give heat; the rain I  
Hold back and send forth;  
Both immortality and death,  
Both the existent and the non-existent am I, Arjuna.
20. The three-Veda-men, soma-drinkers, purified of sin, Me  
With ritual worship worshipping, seek to go to heaven;  
They, attaining the meritorious world of the lord of the gods (Indra),  
Taste in the sky the divine enjoyments of the gods.
21. They, after enjoying the expansive world of heaven,  
When their merit is exhausted, enter the world of mortals;  
Thus conforming to the religion of the three (Vedas),  
Men who lust after desires get that which comes and goes.
22. Thinking on Me, with no other thought,  
What folk wait upon Me,  
To them, when they are constant in perseverance,  
I bring acquisition and peaceful possession (of their aim).
23. Even those who are devotees of other gods,  
And worship them permeated with faith,  
It is only Me, son of Kuntī, that even they  
Worship, (tho) not in the enjoined fashion.
24. For I of all acts of worship  
Am both the recipient and the lord;  
But they do not recognize Me  
In the true way; therefore they fall (from the 'heaven' they win).
25. Votaries of the gods go to the gods,  
Votaries of the (departed) fathers go to the fathers,  
Worshippers of goblins go to the goblins,  
Worshippers of Me also go to Me.
26. A leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water,  
Who presents to Me with devotion,  
That offering of devotion I  
Accept from the devout-souled (giver).<sup>2</sup>

27. yat karoṣi yad aśnāsi  
 yaj juhoṣi dadāsi yat  
 yat tapasyasi kaunteya  
 tat kuruṣva madarpaṇam

28. śubhāśubhaphalair evaṃ  
 mokṣyase karmabandhanaiḥ  
 saṃnyāsayogayuktātmā  
 vimukto mām upaiśyasi

29. samo 'haṃ sarvabhūteṣu  
 na me dveṣyo 'sti na priyaḥ  
 ye bhajanti tu mām bhaktyā  
 mayi te teṣu cā 'py aham

30. api cet sudurācāro  
 bhajate mām ananyabhāk  
 sādhuḥ eva sa mantavyaḥ  
 samyag vyavasito hi saḥ

31. kṣīpraṃ bhavati dharmātmā  
 śāśvacchāntiṃ nigacchati  
 kaunteya pratijñānihi  
 na me bhaktaḥ praṇaśyati

32. mām hi pārtha vyapāśritya  
 ye 'pi syuḥ pāpayonayaḥ  
 striyo vaiśyās tathā śūdrās  
 te 'pi yānti parām gatim

33. kiṃ punar brāhmaṇāḥ puṇyā  
 bhaktā rājarṣayas tathā  
 anityam asukhaṃ lokam  
 imaṃ prāpya bhajasva mām

34. manmanā bhava madbhakto  
 madyājī mām namaskuru  
 mām evai 'śyasi yuktvai 'vam  
 ātmānaṃ matparāyaṇaḥ

iti rājavidyārājaguhyayogo nāma navamo 'dhyāyaḥ

27. Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest,  
 Whatever thou offerest in oblation or givest,  
 Whatever austerity thou performest, son of Kuntī,  
 That do as an offering to Me.
28. Thus from what have good and evil fruits  
 Thou shalt be freed, (namely) from the bonds of action;  
 Thy soul disciplined in the discipline of renunciation,<sup>3</sup>  
 Freed, thou shalt go to Me.
29. I am the same to all beings,  
 No one is hateful or dear to Me;  
 But those who revere Me with devotion,  
 They are in Me and I too am in them.
30. Even if a very evil doer  
 Reveres Me with single devotion,  
 He must be regarded as righteous in spite of all;  
 For he has the right resolution.
31. Quickly his soul becomes righteous,  
 And he goes to eternal peace.  
 Son of Kuntī, make sure of this:  
 No devotee of Mine is lost.
32. For if they take refuge in Me, son of Pṛthā,  
 Even those who may be of base origin,  
 Women, men of the artisan caste, and serfs too,  
 Even they go to the highest goal.
33. How much more virtuous brahmans,  
 And devout royal seers, too!  
 A fleeting and joyless world  
 This; having attained it, devote thyself to Me.
34. Be Me-minded, devoted to Me;  
 Worshiping Me, pay homage to Me;  
 Just to Me shalt thou go, having thus disciplined  
 Thyself, fully intent on Me.

Here ends the Ninth Chapter, called Discipline of Royal Knowledge  
 and Royal Mystery.

## X

### śrībhagavān uvāca

1. bhūya eva mahābāho  
śṛṇu me paramaṃ vacaḥ  
yat te 'haṃ prīyamāṇāya  
vakṣyāmi hitakāmyayā
2. na me viduḥ suragaṇāḥ  
prabhavaṃ na maharṣayaḥ  
aham ādir hi devānāṃ  
maharṣiṇāṃ ca sarvaśaḥ
3. yo mām ajam anādiṃ ca  
vetti lokamaheśvaram  
asaṃmūḍhaḥ sa martyeṣu  
sarvapāpaiḥ pramucyate
4. buddhir jñānam asaṃmohaḥ  
kṣamā-satyam damaḥ śamaḥ  
sukhaṃ duḥkhaṃ bhavo 'bhāvo  
bhayaṃ cā 'bhayaṃ eva ca
5. ahiṃsā samatā tuṣṭis  
tapo dānam yaśo 'yaśaḥ  
bhavanti bhāvā bhūtānāṃ  
matta eva pṛthagvidhāḥ
6. maharṣayaḥ sapta pūrve  
catvāro manavas tathā  
madbhāvā mānasā jātā  
yeṣāṃ loka imāḥ prajāḥ
7. etāṃ vibhūtiṃ yogaṃ ca  
mama yo vetti tattvataḥ  
so 'vikampena yogena  
yujoyate nā 'tra saṃśayaḥ
8. ahaṃ sarvasya prabhavo  
mattaḥ sarvaṃ pravartate  
iti matvā bhajante mām  
budhā bhāvasamanvitāḥ

## CHAPTER X

The Blessed One said:

1. Yet further, great-armed one,  
Hear My highest message,  
Which to thee, that delightest in it, I  
Shall declare, in that I wish thee well.
2. The throngs of gods know not My  
Origin, nor yet the great seers.  
For I am the starting-point of the gods,  
And of the great seers, altogether.
3. Whoso Me the unborn and beginningless  
Knows, the great lord of the world,  
Undeluded, he among mortals  
Is freed from all evils.
4. Enlightenment, knowledge, non-delusion,  
Patience, truth, control, peace,  
Pleasure, pain, arising, passing away,  
Fear, and fearlessness too,
5. Harmlessness, indifference, content,  
Austerity, generosity, fame and ill repute - -  
(All) conditions of beings arise  
From Me alone, however various their nature.
6. The seven great seers of old,  
The four Manus <sup>1</sup> likewise,  
Originate from Me, <sup>2</sup> as My mental offspring,  
From whom spring these creatures in the world.
7. This supernal-manifestation <sup>3</sup> and mystic power  
Of Mine, whoso knows in very truth ---  
He with unswerving discipline  
Is disciplined; there is no doubt of that.
8. I am the origin of all;  
From Me all comes forth.  
Knowing this they revere Me,  
Enlightened men, pervaded with (the proper) state (of mind).<sup>4</sup>

9. maccittā madgataprāṇā  
bodhayantaḥ paraspāram  
kathayantaś ca māṃ nityaṃ  
tuṣyanti ca ramanti ca
10. teṣāṃ satatayuktānāṃ  
bhajatāṃ prītipūrvakam  
dadāmi buddhiyogaṃ taṃ  
yena mām upayānti te
11. teṣāṃ evā 'nukampārtham  
aham ajñānajaṃ tamaḥ  
nāśayāmy ātmabhāvastho  
jñānadīpena bhāsvatā  
arjuna uvāca
12. paraṃ brahma paraṃ dhāma  
pavitraṃ paramaṃ bhavān  
puruṣaṃ śāśvataṃ divyam  
ādidevam ajaṃ vibhum
13. āhuḥ tvām ṛṣayaḥ sarve  
devarṣir nāradaś tathā  
asito devalo vyāsaḥ  
svayaṃ ca 'va bravīṣi me
14. sarvaṃ etad ṛtaṃ manye  
yaṃ mām vadasi keśava  
na hi te bhagavan vyaktiṃ  
vidur devā na dānavāḥ
15. svayaṃ evā 'tmanā 'tmānaṃ  
vettha tvaṃ puruṣottama  
bhūtabhāvana bhūteśa  
devadeva jagatpate
16. vaktum arhasy aśeṣeṇa  
divyā hy ātmavibhūtayāḥ  
yābhir vibhūtibhir lokān  
imāṃś tvaṃ vyāpya tiṣṭhasi
17. kathaṃ vidyāṃ ahaṃ yogiṃś  
tvāṃ sadā paricintayan  
keṣu-keṣu ca bhāveṣu  
cintyo 'si bhagavan mayā



9. With thoughts on Me, with life concentrated on Me,  
Enlightening one another,  
And telling constantly of Me,  
They find contentment and joy.
  10. To them, constantly disciplined,  
Revering Me with love,  
I give that discipline of mind,  
Whereby they go unto Me.
  11. To show compassion to those same ones,  
Their ignorance-born darkness I  
Dispel, (while) remaining in My own true state,  
With the shining light of knowledge.
- Arjuna said:
12. The supreme Brahman, the supreme station,<sup>5</sup>  
The supreme purifier art Thou!  
The eternal divine spirit,  
The primal deity, the unborn lord,<sup>6</sup>
  13. Call Thee all the seers,  
And the divine seer Nārada,  
Asita Devala,<sup>7</sup> and Vyāsa,  
And Thou Thyself declarest it to me.
  14. All this I hold to be true,  
Which Thou sayest to me, Keśava;  
For Thy manifestation, Blessed One, neither  
The gods nor the demons know.
  15. Thine own self by Thy self alone  
Knowest Thou, highest of spirits,  
Cause of being of beings, lord of beings,  
God of gods, lord of the world.
  16. Declare then fully, I pray Thee, —  
For marvelous are the supernal-manifestations of Thy self,  
With which manifestations the worlds  
Here pervading Thou abidest ever.
  17. How may I know Thee, Thou of mystic power,  
Ever meditating on Thee?  
And in what several states of being  
Art Thou to be thought of by me, Blessed One?

18. vistareṇā 'tmano yogaṃ  
vibhūtiṃ ca janārdana  
bhūyaḥ kathaya tṛptir hi  
śṛṇvato nā 'sti me 'mṛtam  
śrībhagavān uvāca
19. hanta te kathayiṣyāmi  
divyā hy ātmavibhūtayaḥ  
prādhānyataḥ kuruśreṣṭha  
nā 'sty anto vistarasya me
20. aham ātmā guḍākeśa  
sarvabhūtāśayasthitaḥ  
aham ādiś ca madhyaṃ ca  
bhūtānām anta eva ca
21. ādityānām ahaṃ viṣṇur  
jyotiṣāṃ ravir aṃśumān  
marīcir marutām asmi  
nakṣatrāṇām ahaṃ śaśī
22. vedānām sāmavedo 'smi  
devānām asmi vāsavaḥ  
indriyāṇām manaś cā 'smi  
bhūtānām asmi cetanā
23. rudrāṇām śaṃkaraś cā 'smi  
viteśo yakṣarakṣasām  
vasūnām pāvakaś cā 'smi  
meruḥ śikhariṇām aham
24. purodhaśāṃ ca mukhyāṃ mām  
viddhi pārtha bṛhaspatim  
senānīnām ahaṃ skandaḥ  
sarasām asmi sāgaraḥ
25. maharṣiṇām bhṛgur ahaṃ  
girām asmy ekam akṣaram  
yajñānām japayajño 'smi  
sthāvarāṇām himālayaḥ
26. aśvatthaḥ sarvavṛkṣāṇām  
devarṣiṇām ca nāradaḥ  
gandharvāṇām citrarathaḥ  
siddhānām kapilo munih

18. In full detail, Thine own mystic power  
And supernal-manifestation, Janārdana,  
Expound further; for satiety  
Comes not to me as I listen to Thy nectar!

Thy Blessed One said:

19. Come then, I shall tell thee —  
Since My supernal-manifestations are marvelous<sup>8</sup>—  
Regarding the chief ones, best of Kurus;  
There is no end to My extent.
20. I am the soul, Guḍākeśa,  
That abides in the heart of all beings;  
I am the beginning and the middle  
Of beings, and the very end too.
21. Of the Ādityas I am Viṣṇu,  
Of lights the radiant sun,  
Of Maruts I am (their chief) Marīci,  
Of stars I am the moon.
22. Of Vedas I am the Sāma Veda,  
Of gods I am Vāsava (Indra),  
Of sense-organs I am the thought-organ,  
Of beings I am the intellect.
23. And of Rudras I am Śaṃkara (Śiva),  
Of sprites and ogres I am the Lord of Wealth (Kubera),  
Of (the eight) Vasus I am the Fire(-god),  
Of mountain-peaks I am Meru.
24. Of house-priests the chief am I,  
Bṛhaspati (the priest-god), know thou, son of Prthā;  
Of army-lords I am Skanda (god of war),  
Of bodies of water I am the ocean.
25. Of great sages I am Bhṛgu,  
Of utterances I am the one syllable (*om*),  
Of acts of worship I am the muttered worship,  
Of mountain-ranges Himālaya.
26. The holy fig-tree of all trees,  
Of divine sages Nārada,  
Of gandharvas (heavenly musicians), Citraratha (their chief),  
Of perfected beings, the seer Kapila.

27. uccaiḥśravasam aśvānām  
viddhi mām amṛtodbhavam  
airāvataṃ gaṇendrāṇām  
narāṇām ca narādhipam
28. āyudhānām ahaṃ vajraṃ  
dhenūnām asmi kāmadhuk  
prajānaś cā 'smi kandarpaḥ  
sarpaṇām asmi vāsukiḥ
29. anantaś cā 'smi nāgānām  
varuṇo yādasām aham  
pitṛṇām aryamā cā 'smi  
yamaḥ sarpyamatām aham
30. prahlādaś cā 'smi daityānām  
kālaḥ kalayatām aham  
mṛgāṇām ca mṛgendro 'haṃ  
vainateyaś ca pakṣiṇām
31. pavanaḥ pavatām asmi  
rāmaḥ śāstrabhṛtām aham  
jhaṣāṇām makaraś cā 'smi  
srotasām asmi jāhnavī
32. sargāṇām ādir antaś ca  
madhyaṃ cai 'vā 'ham arjuna  
adhyātmavidyā vidyānām  
vādaḥ pravadatām aham
33. akṣarāṇām akāro 'smi  
dvandvaḥ sāmāsikasya ca  
aham evā 'kṣayaḥ kālo  
dhātā 'haṃ viśvatomukhaḥ
34. mṛtyuḥ sarvaharaś cā 'ham  
udbhavaś ca bhaviṣyatām  
kīrtiḥ śrīr vāk ca nārīṇām  
smṛtir medhā dhṛtiḥ kṣamā
35. bṛhatsāma tathā sāmnām  
gāyatrī chandasām aham  
māsānām mārگاśrṣo 'ham  
ṛtūnām kusumākaraḥ

27. Uccaiṣravas (Indra's steed) of horses,  
Sprung from the nectar (churned out of ocean), know Me to be;  
Of princely elephants, Airāvata (Indra's elephant),  
And of men, the king.
28. Of weapons I am (Indra's) vajra,  
Of cows I am the Cow-of-Wishes,  
I am the generating Kandarpa (god of love),  
Of serpents I am (the serpent-king) Vāsuki.
29. And I am Ananta of the Nāgas (fabulous serpents),  
I am Varuṇa (god of water) of water-creatures,  
Of (departed) fathers I am (their chief god) Aryaman,  
I am Yama (god of death) of subduers.<sup>9</sup>
30. Of demons I am (their prince) Prahlāda,  
I am Time of impellent-forces,<sup>10</sup>  
Of beasts I am the king of beasts,<sup>11</sup>  
I am the son of Vinatā (Garuḍa, Viṣṇu's bird) of birds.
31. I am the wind of purifiers,  
Rāma of warriors,  
I am the dolphin of water-monsters,  
Of rivers I am the Ganges.
32. Of creations the beginning and the end,  
And the middle too am I, Arjuna;  
Of knowledges the knowledge of the over-soul,  
I am speech of them that speak.<sup>12</sup>
33. Of syllables (letters) I am the letter A,  
And the dvandva of compounds,  
None but I am immortal Time,  
I am the Ordainer (Creator) with faces in all directions.
34. I am death that carries off all,  
And the origin of things that are to be;  
Of feminine entities I am Fame, Fortune, Speech,  
Memory, Wisdom, Steadfastness, Patience.<sup>13</sup>
35. Likewise of chants the Great Chant,  
The Gāyatrī am I of meters,  
Of months, (the first month) Mārgaśīrṣa am I,  
Of seasons the flower-bearer (spring).

36. dyūtaṃ chalayatām asmi  
tejas tejasvinām aham  
jaya 'smi vyavasāyo 'smi  
sattvaṃ sattvavatām aham
37. vṛṣṇīnām vāsudevo 'smi  
pāṇḍavānām dhanamjayāḥ  
munīnām apy ahaṃ vyāsaḥ  
kavīnām uśanā kaviḥ
38. daṇḍo damayatām asmi  
nītir asmi jigīṣatām  
maunaṃ cai 'vā 'smi guhyānām  
jñānaṃ jñānavatām aham
39. yac cā 'pi sarvabhūtānām  
bijaṃ tad aham arjuna  
na tad asti vinā yat syān  
mayā bhūtaṃ carācaram
40. nā 'nto 'sti mama divyānām  
vibhūtinām paramtapa  
eṣa tū 'ddeśataḥ prokto  
vibhūter vistaro mayā
41. yad-yad vibhūtimat sattvaṃ  
śrīmad ūrjitam eva vā  
tat-tad evā 'vagaccha tvaṃ  
mama tejoṃśasaṃbhavam
42. athavā bahunai 'tena  
kiṃ jñātena tavā 'rjuna  
viṣṭabhyā 'ham idaṃ kṛtsnam  
ekāṃśena sthito jagat  
iti vibhūtiyogo nāma daśamo 'dhyāyaḥ

36. I am gambling of rogues,  
 I am majesty of the majestic,  
 I am conquest, I am the spirit-of-adventure,  
 I am courage of the courageous.<sup>14</sup>
37. Of the Vṛṣṇi-clansmen I am Vāsudeva,  
 Of the sons of Pāṇḍu, Dhanamjaya (Arjuna),  
 Of hermits also I am Vyāsa,  
 Of sages the sage Uśanas.
38. I am the rod (punitive force) of stern controllers,  
 I am statecraft of them that seek political success;  
 Taciturnity too am I of secret things,  
 I am knowledge of the knowing.
39. Moreover whatsoever of all beings  
 Is the seed, that am I, Arjuna;  
 There is none such as could be without  
 Me, no being moving or unmoving.
40. There is no end to My marvelous  
 Supernal-manifestations, scorcher of the foe;  
 But I have now declared by way of examples  
 The extent of my supernal-manifestation.
41. Whatever being shows supernal-manifestations,<sup>15</sup>  
 Or majesty or vigor,  
 Be thou assured that that in every case  
 Is sprung from a fraction of My glory.
42. After all, this extensive  
 Instruction — what boots it thee, Arjuna?  
 I support this entire  
 World with a single fraction (of Myself), and remain so.

Here ends the Tenth Chapter, called Discipline of Supernal-Manifestations.

## XI

### arjuna uvāca

1. madanugrahāya paramaṃ  
guhyam adhyātmasaṃjñitam  
yat tvayo 'ktaṃ vacas tena  
moho 'yaṃ vigato mama
2. bhavāpyayau hi bhūtānāṃ  
śrutau vistaraśo mayā  
tvattaḥ kamalapattrākṣa  
māhātmyam api cā 'vyayam
3. evam etad yathā 'ttha tvam  
ātmānaṃ parameśvara  
draṣṭum icchāmi te rūpaṃ  
aiśvaraṃ puruṣottama
4. manyase yadi tac chakyaṃ  
mayā draṣṭum iti prabho  
yogeśvara tato me tvaṃ  
darśayā 'tmānam avyayam

### śrībhagavān uvāca

5. paśya me pārtha rūpāṇi  
śataśo 'tha sahasraśaḥ  
nānāvidhāni divyāni  
nānāvarṇākṛtīni ca
6. paśyā 'dityān vasūn rudrān  
aśvinau marutas tathā  
bahūny adṛṣṭapūrvāṇi  
paśyā 'ścaryāṇi bhārata
7. ihai 'kastaṃ jagat kṛtsnaṃ  
paśyā 'dya sacarācaram  
mama dehe guḍākeśa  
yac cā 'nyad draṣṭum icchasi
8. na tu māṃ śakyase draṣṭum  
anena 'va svacakṣuṣā  
divyaṃ dadāmi te cakṣuḥ  
paśya me yogam aiśvaram



## CHAPTER XI

Arjuna said:

1. As a favor to me the supreme  
Mystery, called the over-soul,  
The words which Thou hast spoken, thereby  
This delusion of mine is dispelled.
2. For the origin and dissolution of beings  
Have been heard by me in full detail  
From Thee, Lotus-petal-eyed One,  
And also (Thine) exalted nature unending.
3. Thus it is, as Thou declarest  
Thyself, O Supreme Lord.  
I desire to see Thy form  
As God, O Supreme Spirit!
4. If Thou thinkest that it can  
Be seen by me, O Lord,  
Prince of mystic power, then do Thou to me  
Reveal Thine immortal Self.

The Blessed One said:

5. Behold My forms, son of Pṛthā,  
By hundreds and by thousands,  
Of various sorts, marvelous,  
Of various colors and shapes.
6. Behold the Ādityas, Vasus, Rudras,  
The Aśvin-pair and the Maruts too;  
Many before-unseen  
Marvels behold, son of Bharata.
7. Here the whole world united  
Behold today, with moving and unmoving things  
In My body, Guḍākeśa,  
And whatsoever else thou wishest to see.
8. But thou canst not see Me  
With this same eye of thine own;  
I give thee a supernatural eye:  
Behold My mystic power as God!

saṁjaya uvāca

9. evaṁ uktvā tato rājan  
mahāyogeśvaro hariḥ  
darśayām āsa pārthāya  
paramaṁ rūpaṁ aiśvaram
10. anekavaktranayanam  
anekādbhutadarśanam  
anekadivyaḥbharanam  
divyānekodyatāyudham
11. divyamālyāmbaradharam  
divyagandhānulepanam  
sarvāścaryamayaṁ devam  
anantaṁ viśvatomukham
12. divi sūryasahasrasya  
bhaved yugapad utthitā  
yadi bhāḥ sadṛśī sā syād  
bhāsas tasya mahātmanaḥ
13. tatrai 'kasthaṁ jagat kṛtsnaṁ  
pravibhaktam anekadhā  
apaśyad devadevasya  
śarīre pāṇḍavas tadā
14. tataḥ sa vismayāviṣṭo  
hr̥ṣṭaromā dhanamjayah  
praṇamya śīrasā devam  
kṛtāñjalir abhāṣata  
  
arjuna uvāca
15. paśyāmi devāṁs tava deva dehe  
sarvāṁs tathā bhūtaviśeṣasaṁghān  
brahmāṇam īśaṁ kamalāsanastham  
ṛṣīṁś ca sarvān uragāṁś ca divyān
16. anekabāhūdaravaktranetraṁ  
paśyāmi tvāṁ sarvato 'nantarūpaṁ  
nā 'ntaṁ na madhyaṁ na punas tavā 'dira  
paśyāmi viśveśvara viśvarūpa
17. kirīṭinaṁ gadināṁ cakriṇāṁ ca  
tejorāśiṁ sarvato dīptimantam  
paśyāmi tvāṁ durnirikṣyaṁ samantād  
dīptānalārkadyutim aprameyam

Samjaya said:

9. Thus speaking then, O king,  
     Hari (Viṣṇu), the great Lord of Mystic Power,  
     Showed unto the son of Pṛthā  
     His supernal form as God:
10. Of many mouths and eyes,  
     Of many wondrous aspects,  
     Of many marvelous ornaments,  
     Of marvelous and many uplifted weapons;
11. Wearing marvelous garlands and garments,  
     With marvelous perfumes and ointments,  
     Made up of all wonders, the god,  
     Infinite, with faces in all directions.
12. Of a thousand suns in the sky  
     If suddenly should burst forth  
     The light, it would be like  
     Unto the light of that exalted one.
13. The whole world there united,  
     And divided many-fold,  
     Beheld in the God of Gods'  
     Body the son of Pāṇḍu then.
14. Then filled with amazement,  
     His hair standing upright, Dhanamjaya  
     Bowed with his head to the God,  
     And said with a gesture of reverence:  
         Arjuna said:
15. I see the gods in Thy body, O God,  
     All of them, and the hosts of various kinds of beings too,  
     Lord Brahmā sitting on the lotus-seat,  
     And the seers all, and the divine serpents.
16. With many arms, bellies, mouths, and eyes,  
     I see Thee, infinite in form on all sides;  
     No end nor middle nor yet beginning of Thee  
     Do I see, O All-God, All-formed!
17. With diadem, club, and disc,  
     A mass of radiance, glowing on all sides,  
     I see Thee, hard to look at, on every side  
     With the glory of flaming fire and sun, immeasurable.

18. tvam akṣaram paramaṃ veditavyam  
 tvam asya viśvasya paraṃ nidhānam  
 tvam avyayaḥ śāśvatadharmagoptā  
 sanātanas tvam puruṣo mato me
19. anādimadhyāntam anantavīryam  
 anantabāhuṃ śāśisūryanetram  
 paśyāmi tvāṃ dīptahutāśavaktraṃ  
 svatejasā viśvam idaṃ tapantam
20. dyāvāprthivyor idaṃ antaraṃ hi  
 vyāptaṃ tvayai 'kena diśāś ca sarvāḥ  
 dr̥ṣṭvā 'dbhutaṃ rūpam ugraṃ tave 'daṃ  
 lokatrayaṃ pravyathitaṃ mahātman
21. amī hi tvāṃ surasaṃghā viśanti  
 kecid bhītāḥ prāñjalayo gr̥ṇanti  
 svastī 'ty uktvā mahar̥ṣisiddhasaṃghāḥ  
 stuvanti tvāṃ stutibhiḥ puṣkalābhiḥ
22. rudrādityā vasavo ye ca sādhyā  
 viśve 'śvinau marutaś co 'ṣmapāś ca  
 gandharvayakṣāsurasiddhasaṃghā  
 vikṣante tvāṃ vismitāś cai 'va sarve
23. rūpaṃ mahat te bahuvaktranetraṃ  
 mahābāho bahubāhūrupādam  
 bahūdaraṃ bahudaṃṣṭrākārālaṃ  
 dr̥ṣṭvā lokāḥ pravyathitās tathā 'ham
24. nabhaḥspr̥ṣaṃ dīptam anekavarṇaṃ  
 vyāttānanaṃ dīptaviśālanetraṃ  
 dr̥ṣṭvā hi tvāṃ pravyathitāntarātmā  
 dhṛtiṃ na vindāmi śamaṃ ca viṣṇo
25. daṃṣṭrākārālāni ca te mukhāni  
 dr̥ṣṭvai 'va kālānalasaṃnibhāni  
 diśo na jāne na labhe ca śarma  
 prasīda deveśa jagannivāsa
26. amī ca tvāṃ dhṛtarāṣṭrasya putrāḥ  
 sarve sahai 'vā 'vanipālasaṃghaiḥ  
 bhīṣmo droṇaḥ sūta-putras tathā 'sau  
 sahā 'smadiyair api yodhamukhyaiḥ

18. Thou art the Imperishable, the supreme Object of Knowledge;  
Thou art the ultimate resting-place<sup>1</sup> of this universe;  
Thou art the immortal guardian of the eternal right,  
Thou art the everlasting Spirit, I hold.
19. Without beginning, middle, or end, of infinite power,  
Of infinite arms, whose eyes are the moon and sun,  
I see Thee, whose face<sup>2</sup> is flaming fire,  
Burning this whole universe with Thy radiance.
20. For this region between heaven and earth  
Is pervaded by Thee alone, and all the directions;  
Seeing this Thy wondrous, terrible form,  
The triple world trembles, O exalted one!
21. For into Thee are entering<sup>3</sup> yonder throngs of gods;  
Some, affrighted, praise Thee with reverent gestures;  
Crying 'Hail!' the throngs of the great seers and perfected ones  
Praise Thee with abundant laudations.
22. The Rudras, the Ādityas, the Vasus, and the Sādhyas,  
All-gods, Aśvins, Maruts, and the Steam-drinkers ('fathers'),  
The hosts of heavenly musicians, sprites, demons, and perfected ones,  
Gaze upon Thee, and all are quite amazed.
23. Thy great form, of many mouths and eyes,  
O great-armed one, of many arms, thighs, and feet,  
Of many bellies, terrible with many tusks, —  
Seeing it the worlds tremble, and I too.
24. Touching the sky, aflame, of many colors,  
With yawning mouths and flaming enormous eyes,  
Verily seeing Thee (so), my inmost soul is shaken,  
And I find no steadiness nor peace, O Viṣṇu!
25. And Thy mouths, terrible with great tusks,  
No sooner do I see them, like the fire of dissolution (of the world),  
Than I know not the directions of the sky, and I find no refuge;  
Have mercy, Lord of Gods, Thou in whom the world dwells!
26. And Thee<sup>4</sup> yonder sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra,  
All of them, together with the hosts of kings,  
Bhīṣma, Droṇa, and yonder son of the charioteer (Karna) too,  
Together with our chief warriors likewise,

27. vaktrāṇi te tvaramāṇā viśanti  
 daṁṣṭrākarālāni bhayānakāni  
 kecid vilagnā daśanāntareṣu  
 saṁdṛśyante cūrṇitair uttamāṅgaiḥ
28. yathā nadīnām bahavo 'mbuvegāḥ  
 samudram evā 'bhimukhā dravanti  
 tathā tavā 'mī naralokavīrā  
 viśanti vaktrāṇy abhivijvalanti
29. yathā pradīptam jvalanam pataṅgā  
 viśanti nāśāya samṛddhavegāḥ  
 tathai 'va nāśāya viśanti lokās  
 tavā 'pi vaktrāṇi samṛddhavegāḥ
30. lelihyase grasamānaḥ samantāl  
 lokān samagrān vadanair jvaladbhiḥ  
 tejobhir āpūrya jagat samagram  
 bhāsas tavo 'grāḥ pratapanti viṣṇo
31. ākhyāhi me ko bhavān ugrarūpo  
 namo 'stu te devavara prasīda  
 vijñātum icchāmi bhavantam ādyaṁ  
 na hi prajānāmi tava pravṛttim  
 śrībhagavān uvāca
32. kālo 'smi lokakṣayakṛt pravṛddho  
 lokān samāhartum iha pravṛttaḥ  
 rte 'pi tvām na bhaviṣyanti sarve  
 ye 'vasthitāḥ pratyānīkeṣu yodhāḥ
33. tasmāt tvam uttiṣṭha yaśo labhasva  
 jitvā śatrūn bhuṅkṣva rājyaṁ samṛddham  
 mayai 'vai 'te nihatāḥ pūrvam eva  
 nimittamātraṁ bhava savyasācin
34. droṇaṁ ca bhīṣmaṁ ca jayadrathaṁ ca  
 karṇaṁ tathā 'nyān api yodhavīrān  
 mayā hatāms tvam jahi mā vyathīṣṭhā  
 yudhyasva jetāsi raṇe sapatnān  
 saṁjaya uvāca
35. etac chrutvā yacanaṁ keśavasya  
 kṛtāñjalir vepamānaḥ kirīṭi  
 namaskṛtvā bhūya evā 'ha kṛṣṇaṁ  
 sagadgadaṁ bhītabhītaḥ praṇamya

27. Hastening enter Thy mouths,  
Frightful with tusks, and terrifying;  
Some, stuck between the teeth,  
Are seen with their heads crushed.
28. As the many water-torrents of the rivers  
Rush headlong towards the single sea,  
So yonder heroes of the world of men into Thy  
Flaming mouths do enter.
29. As moths into a burning flame  
Do enter unto their destruction with utmost impetuosity,  
Just so unto their destruction enter the worlds <sup>6</sup>  
Into Thy mouths also, with utmost impetuosity.
30. Devouring them Thou lickest up voraciously on all sides  
All the worlds with Thy flaming jaws;  
Filling with radiance the whole universe,  
Thy terrible splendors burn, O Viṣṇu!
31. Tell me, who art Thou, of awful form?  
Homage be to Thee: Best of Gods, be merciful!  
I desire to understand Thee, the primal one;  
For I do not comprehend what Thou hast set out to do.  
  
The Blessed One said:
32. I am Time (Death), cause of destruction of the worlds, matured  
And set out to gather in the worlds here.  
Even without thee (thy action), all shall cease to exist,  
The warriors that are drawn up in the opposing ranks.
33. Therefore arise thou, win glory,  
Conquer thine enemies and enjoy prospered kingship;  
By Me Myself they have already been slain long ago;  
Be thou the mere instrument, left-handed archer!
34. Droṇa and Bhīṣma and Jayadratha,  
Karna too, and the other warrior-heroes as well,  
Do thou slay, (since) they are already slain by Me; do not hesitate!  
Fight! Thou shalt conquer thy rivals in battle.  
  
Saṁjaya said:
35. Hearing these words of Keśava,  
Making a reverent gesture, trembling, the Diademed (Arjuna)  
Made obeisance and spoke yet again to Kṛṣṇa,  
Stammering, greatly affrighted, bowing down:

arjuna uvāca

36. sthāne hr̥ṣīkeśa tava prakīrtyā  
jagat prahr̥ṣyaty anurajyate ca  
rakṣāṃsi bhītāni diśo dravanti  
sarve namasyanti ca siddhasaṃghāḥ
37. kasmāc ca te na nameran mahātman  
garīyase brahmaṇo 'py ādikartre  
ananta deveśa jagannivāsa  
tvam akṣaram sad asat tatparam yat
38. tvam ādidevaḥ puruṣaḥ purāṇas  
tvam asya viśvasya param nidhānam  
vettā 'si vedyam ca param ca dhāma  
tvayā tataṃ viśvam anantarūpa
39. vāyur yamo 'gnir varuṇaḥ śaśāṅkaḥ  
prajāpatis tvam prapitāmahaś ca  
namo namas te 'stu sahasrakṛtvaḥ  
punaś ca bhūyo 'pi namo namas te
40. namaḥ purastād atha pṛṣṭhatas te  
namo 'stu te sarvata eva sarva  
anantavīryāmitavikramas tvam  
sarvaṃ samāpnoṣi tato 'si sarvaḥ
41. sakhe 'ti matvā prasabham yad uktam  
he kṛṣṇa he yādava he sakhe 'ti  
ajānatā mahimānaṃ tave 'dam  
mayā pramādāt praṇayena vā 'pi
42. yac cā 'vahāsārtham asatkṛto 'si  
vihāraśayyāsanabhojaneṣu  
eko 'thavā 'py acyuta tatsamakṣam  
tat kṣāmaye tvām aham aprameyam
43. pitā 'si lokasya carācarasya  
tvam asya pūjyaś ca gurur garīyān  
na tvatsamo 'sty abhyadhikaḥ kuto 'nyo  
lokatraye 'py apratimaprabhāva
44. tasmāt praṇamya praṇidhāya kāyaṃ  
prasādaye tvām aham īśam īdyaṃ  
pite 'va putrasya sakhe 'va sakhyuḥ  
priyaḥ priyāyā 'rhasi deva soḍhum



Arjuna said:

36. It is in place, Hṛṣīkeśa, that at Thy praise  
The world rejoices and is exceeding glad;  
Ogres fly in terror in all directions,  
And all the hosts of perfected ones pay homage.
37. And why should they not pay homage to Thee, Exalted One?  
Thou art greater even than Brahman<sup>6</sup>; Thou art the First Creator;  
O infinite Lord of Gods, in whom the world dwells,  
Thou the imperishable, existent, non-existent, and beyond both!
38. Thou art the Primal God, the Ancient Spirit,  
Thou art the supreme resting-place<sup>7</sup> of this universe;  
Thou art the knower, the object of knowledge, and the highest station,  
By Thee the universe is pervaded, Thou of infinite form!
39. Vāyu, Yama, Agni, Varuṇa, the moon,  
Prajāpati art Thou, and the Greatgrandsire;  
Homage, homage be to Thee a thousand fold,  
And again be yet further homage, homage to Thee!
40. Homage be to Thee from in front and from behind,  
Homage be to Thee from all sides, Thou All!  
O Thou of infinite might,<sup>8</sup> Thy prowess is unmeasured;  
Thou attainest all; therefore Thou art All!
41. Whatever I said rashly, thinking Thee my boon-companion,  
Calling Thee 'Kṛṣṇa, Yādava, Companion!,'  
Not knowing this (truth, namely) Thy greatness,<sup>9</sup>  
Thru careless negligence, or even thru affection,
42. And if I treated Thee disrespectfully, to make sport of Thee,  
In the course of amusement, resting, sitting, or eating,  
Either alone, O unshaken one, or in the presence of those (others),  
For that I beg forgiveness of Thee, the immeasurable one.
43. Thou art the father of the world of things that move and move not,  
And Thou art its revered, most venerable Guru;  
There is no other like Thee — how then a greater? —  
Even in the three worlds, O Thou of matchless greatness!
44. Therefore, bowing and prostrating my body,  
I beg grace of Thee, the Lord to be revered:  
As a father to his son, as a friend to his friend,  
As a lover to his beloved, be pleased to show mercy, O God!

45. adṛṣṭapūrvam hr̥ṣito 'smi dṛṣṭvā  
bhayena ca pravayathitam mano me  
tad eva me darśaya deva rūpam  
prasīda deveśa jagannivāsa
46. kirīṭinam gadinam cakrahastam  
icchāmi tvām draṣṭum aham tathai 'va  
tenai 'va rūpeṇa caturbhujena  
sahasrabāho bhava viśvamūrte

śrībhagavān uvāca

47. mayā prasannena tavā 'rjune 'dam  
rūpam param darśitam ātmayogāt  
tejomayam viśvam anantam ādyam  
yan me tvadanyena na dṛṣṭapūrvam
48. na vedayajñādhyayanair na dānair  
na ca kriyābhir na tapobhir ugraiḥ  
evamrūpaḥ śakya aham nṛloke  
draṣṭum tvadanyena kurupravīra
49. mā te vyathā mā ca vimūḍhabhāvo  
dṛṣṭvā rūpam ghoram idṛṇ mame 'dam  
vyapetabhīḥ prītamanāḥ punas tvam  
tad eva me rūpam idam prapaśya

saṁjaya uvāca

50. ity arjunam vāsudevas tatho 'ktvā  
svakam rūpam darśayām āsa bhūyaḥ  
āśvāsayām āsa ca bhītam enam  
bhūtvā punaḥ saumyavapur mahātmā

arjuna uvāca

51. dṛṣṭve 'dam mānuṣam rūpam  
tava saumyam janārdana  
idānīm asmi saṁvṛttaḥ  
sacetāḥ prakṛtiṁ gataḥ

śrībhagavān uvāca

52. sudurdarśam idam rūpam  
dṛṣṭavān asi yan mama  
devā apy asya rūpasya  
nityam darśanakāṅkṣiṇaḥ

45. Having seen what was never seen before, I am thrilled,  
And (at the same time) my heart is shaken with fear;  
Show me, O God, that same form of Thine (as before)!  
Be merciful, Lord of Gods, Abode of the World!
46. Wearing the diadem, carrying the club, with disc in hand,  
Just (as before) I desire to see Thee;  
In that same four-armed shape  
Present Thyself, O Thousand-armed One, of universal form!

The Blessed One said:

47. By Me showing grace towards thee, Arjuna, this  
Supreme form has been manifested by My own mysterious power;  
(This form) made up of splendor, universal, infinite, primal,  
Of Mine, which has never been seen before by any other than thee.
48. Not by the Vedas, by acts of worship, or study, or gifts,  
Nor yet by rites, nor by grim austerities,  
In the world of men can I in such a form  
Be seen by any other than thee, hero of the Kurus.
49. Have no perturbation, nor any state of bewilderment,  
Seeing this so awful form of Mine;  
Dispel thy fear; let thy heart be of good cheer; again do thou  
Behold that same (former) form of Mine: here!

Samjaya said:

50. Having thus spoken to Arjuna, Vāsudeva  
Again revealed his own (natural) form,  
And comforted him in his fright  
By once more assuming his gracious aspect, the Exalted One.

Arjuna said:

51. Seeing this human form  
Of Thine, gracious, O Janārdana,  
Now I have become  
Possessed of my senses, and restored to normal state.

The Blessed One said:

52. This form that is right hard to see,  
Which thou hast seen of Mine,  
Of this form even the gods  
Constantly long for the sight.

53. nā 'haṃ vedair na tapasā  
 na dānena na ce 'jyayā  
 śakya evaṃvidho draṣṭuṃ  
 dr̥ṣṭavān asi mām yathā
54. bhaktyā tv ananyayā śakya  
 aham evaṃvidho 'rjuna  
 jñātuṃ draṣṭuṃ ca tattvena  
 praveṣṭuṃ ca paramtapa
55. matkarmakṛṇ matparamo  
 madbhaktaḥ saṅgavarjitaḥ  
 nirvairaḥ sarvabhūteṣu  
 yaḥ sa mām eti pāṇḍava
- iti viśvarūpadarśanayogo nāmai 'kādaśo 'dhyayaḥ

53. Not by the Vedas nor by austerity,  
Nor by gifts or acts of worship,  
Can I be seen in such a guise,  
As thou hast seen Me.
54. But by unswerving devotion can  
I in such a guise, Arjuna,  
Be known and seen in very truth,  
And entered into, scorcher of the foe.
55. Doing My work, intent on Me,  
Devoted to Me, free from attachment,  
Free from enmity to all beings,  
Who is so, goes to Me, son of Pāṇḍu.

**Here ends the Eleventh Chapter, called Discipline of the Vision of the Universal Form.**

## XII

arjuna uvāca

1. evaṃ satatayuktā ye  
bhaktās tvāṃ paryupāsate  
ye cā 'py akṣaram avyaktaṃ  
teṣāṃ ke yogavittamāḥ

śrībhagavān uvāca

2. mayy āveśya mano ye mām  
nityayuktā upāsate  
śraddhayā parayo 'petās  
te me yuktatamā matāḥ
3. ye tv akṣaram anirdeśyam  
avyaktaṃ paryupāsate  
sarvatragam acintyaṃ ca  
kūṭastham acalaṃ dhruvam
4. saṃnyamyē 'ndriyagrāmaṃ  
sarvatra samabuddhayaḥ  
te prāpnuvanti mām eva  
sarvabhūtahite ratāḥ
5. kleśo 'dhikataras teṣāṃ  
avyaktāsaktacetāsām  
avyaktā hi gatiḥ duḥkhaṃ  
dehavadbhir avāpyate
6. ye tu sarvāṇi karmāṇi  
mayi saṃnyasya matparāḥ  
ananyenai 'va yogena  
mām dhyāyanta upāsate
7. teṣāṃ ahaṃ samuddhartā  
mṛtyusaṃsārasāgarāt  
bhavāmi nacirāt pārtha  
mayy āveśitacetāsām
8. mayy eva mana ādhatsva  
mayi buddhiṃ niveśaya  
nivasīṣyasi mayy eva  
ata ūrdhvaṃ na saṃśayaḥ

## CHAPTER XII

Arjuna said:

1. Those who are thus constantly disciplined,  
And revere Thee with devotion,  
And those also who (revere) the imperishable unmanifest —  
Of these which are the best knowers of discipline?

The Blessed One said:

2. Fixing the thought-organ on Me, those who Me  
Revere with constant discipline,  
Pervaded with supreme faith,  
Them I hold to be the most disciplined.
3. But those who the imperishable, undefinable,  
Unmanifest, revere,  
The omnipresent and unthinkable,  
The immovable,<sup>1</sup> unchanging, fixed,
4. Restraining the throng of the senses,  
With mental attitude alike to all,<sup>2</sup>  
They (also) reach none but Me,  
Delighting in the welfare of all beings.
5. Greater is the toil of them  
That have their hearts fixed on the unmanifest;  
For with difficulty is the unmanifest goal  
Attained by embodied (souls).
6. But those who, all actions  
Casting on Me,<sup>3</sup> intent on Me,  
With utterly unswerving discipline  
Meditating on Me, revere Me,
7. For them I the Savior  
From the sea of the round of deaths  
Become right soon, son of Pṛthā,  
When they have made their thoughts enter into Me.
8. Fix thy thought-organ on Me alone;  
Make thy consciousness enter into Me;  
And thou shalt come to dwell even in Me  
Hereafter; there is no doubt of this.

9. atha cittam samādhātum  
na śaknoṣi mayi sthiram  
abhyāsayogena tato  
mām icchā 'ptum dhanamjaya
10. abhyāse 'py asamartho 'si  
matkarmaparamo bhava  
madartham api karmāṇi  
kurvan siddhim avāpsyasi
11. athai 'tad apy aśakto 'si  
kartum madyogam āśritaḥ  
sarvakarmaphalatyāgam  
tataḥ kuru yatātmavān
12. śreyo hi jñānam abhyāsāj  
jñānād dhyānam viśiṣyate  
dhyānāt karmaphalatyāgas  
tyāgāc chāntir anantaram
13. adveṣṭā sarvabhūtānām  
maitraḥ karuṇa eva ca  
nirmamo nirahamkāraḥ  
samaduḥkhasukhaḥ kṣamī
14. samtustāḥ satataḥ yogī  
yatātmā dṛḍhaniścayaḥ  
mayy arpitamanobuddhir  
yo madbhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ
15. yasmān no 'dviḡate loko  
lokān no 'dviḡate ca yaḥ  
harṣāmarṣabhayodvegair  
mukto yaḥ sa ca me priyaḥ
16. anapekṣaḥ śucir dakṣa  
udāsīno gatavyathaḥ  
sarvārambhaparityāgī  
yo madbhaktaḥ sa me priyaḥ
17. yo na hr̥ṣyati na dveṣṭi  
na śocati na kāṅkṣati  
śubhāśubhaparityāgī  
bhaktimān yaḥ sa me priyaḥ



9. But if to fix thy thought  
Steadfastly on Me thou art not able,  
With the discipline of practice then  
Seek to win Me, Dhanamjaya.
10. If thou hast no ability even for practice,  
Be wholly devoted to work for Me;  
For My sake also actions  
Performing, thou shalt win perfection.
11. But if even this thou art unable  
To do, resorting to My discipline,  
Abandonment of the fruit of all actions  
Do thou then effect, controlling thyself.
12. For knowledge is better than practice,  
And meditation is superior to knowledge,  
And abandonment of the fruit of actions is better than meditation;  
From abandonment (comes) peace immediately.
- 13 No hater of all beings,  
Friendly and compassionate,  
Free from selfishness and I-faculty,  
Indifferent to pain and pleasure, patient,
14. The disciplined man who is always content,  
Whose self is controlled, of firm resolve,  
Whose thought and consciousness are fixed on Me,  
Who is devoted to Me, he is dear to Me.
15. He before whom people do not tremble,  
And who does not tremble before people,  
From joy, impatience, fear, and agitation  
Who is free, he too is dear to Me.
16. Unconcerned, pure, capable,  
Disinterested, free from perturbation,  
Abandoning all undertakings,  
Who is devoted to Me, is dear to Me.
17. Who neither delights nor loathes,  
Neither grieves nor craves,  
Renouncing good and evil (objects),  
Who is full of devotion, he is dear to Me.

18. samaḥ śatrau ca mitre ca  
 tathā mānāpamānayoḥ  
 śītoṣṇasukhaduḥkheṣu  
 samaḥ saṅgavivarjitaḥ
19. tulyanindāstutir maunī  
 samtupṣṭo yena kenacit  
 aniketaḥ sthīramatir  
 bhaktimān me priyo naraḥ
20. ye tu dharmyāmṛtam idaṃ  
 yathoktaṃ paryupāsate  
 śraddadhānā matparamā  
 bhaktās te 'tīva me priyāḥ  
 iti bhaktiyogo nāma dvādaśo 'dhyāyaḥ

18. Alike to foe and friend,  
Also to honor and disgrace,  
To cold and heat, joy and sorrow  
Alike, freed from attachment,
19. To whom blame and praise are equal, restrained in speech,  
Content with anything that comes,  
Having no home, of steadfast mind,  
Full of devotion, that man is dear to Me.
20. But those who this nectar <sup>4</sup> of duty  
Revere as it has (now) been declared,  
Having faith (in it), intent on Me,  
Those devotees are beyond measure dear to Me.
- Here ends the Twelfth Chapter, Called Discipline of Devotion.

### XIII

śrībhagavān uvāca

1. idaṃ śarīraṃ kaunteya  
kṣetram ity abhidhiyate  
etaḍ yo vetti taṃ prāhuḥ  
kṣetrajña iti tadvidaḥ
2. kṣetrajñaṃ cā 'pi māṃ viddhi  
sarvakṣetreṣu bhārata  
kṣetrakṣetrajñāyor jñānaṃ  
yat taj jñānaṃ mataṃ mama
3. tat kṣetram yac ca yādṛk ca  
yadvikāri yataś ca yat  
sa ca yo yatprabhāvaś ca  
tat samāsenā me śṛṇu
4. ṛṣibhir bahudhā gītaṃ  
chandobhir vividhaiḥ pṛthak  
brahmasūtrapadais ca 'va  
hetumadbhir viniścitaiḥ
5. mahābhūtāny ahaṃkāro  
buddhir avyaktam eva ca  
indriyāṇi daśai 'kaṃ ca  
pañca ce 'ndriyagocarāḥ
6. icchā dveṣaḥ sukhaṃ duḥkhaṃ  
saṃghātaś cetanā dhṛtiḥ  
etaḥ kṣetram samāsenā  
savikāram udāhṛtaṃ
7. amānitvam adambhitvam  
ahimsā kṣāntir ārjavam  
ācāryopāśanam śaucaṃ  
sthairyam ātmavinigrahaḥ
8. indriyārtheṣu vairāgyam  
anahaṃkāra eva ca  
janmamṛtyujarāvvyādhi-  
duḥkhadoṣānudaśanam

## CHAPTER XIII

The Blessed One said:

1. This body, son of Kuntī,  
Is called the Field.  
Who knows this, he is called  
Field-knower by those who know him.
2. Know also that I am the Field-knower  
In all Fields, son of Bharata.  
Knowledge of the Field and Field-knower,  
This I hold to be (true) knowledge.
3. This Field, what it is and of what nature,  
What its modifications, and whence which one (is derived),  
And who He (the Field-knower) is, and what His powers are,  
That hear from Me in brief.
4. This has been sung in many ways by the seers  
In various (Vedic<sup>1</sup>) hymns severally,  
And also in words of aphorisms about Brahman (in the Upaniṣads<sup>2</sup>),  
Well-reasoned and definite.
5. The gross elements, the I-faculty,  
The consciousness, and the unmanifest,  
The senses ten and one,  
And the five objects on which the senses (of perception) play,
6. Desire, loathing, pleasure, pain,  
Association,<sup>3</sup> intellect, steadfastness,  
This in brief as the Field  
Is described, with its modifications.
7. Absence of pride and deceit,  
Harmlessness, patience, uprightness,  
Service of a teacher, purity,  
Firmness, self-control,
8. Aversion to the objects of sense,  
And absence of I-faculty;  
As regards birth, death, old age, disease,  
And sorrow, a perception of their evils;

9. asaktir anabhiṣvaṅgaḥ  
putradāragrhādiṣu  
nityaṃ ca samacittatvam  
iṣṭāniṣṭopapattiṣu
10. mayi cā 'nanyayogena  
bhaktir avyabhicāriṇī  
viviktadeśasevitvam  
aratir janasaṃsadi
11. adhyātmajñānanityatvam  
tattvajñānārthadarśanam  
etaj jñānam iti proktam  
ajñānaṃ yad ato 'nyathā
12. jñeyaṃ yat tat pravakṣyāmi  
yaj jñātvā 'mṛtam aśnute  
anādi matparaṃ brahma  
na sat tan nā 'sad ucyate
13. sarvataḥpāṇipādaṃ tat  
sarvatokṣīṣīromukham  
sarvataḥśrutimal loke  
sarvam āvṛtya tiṣṭhati
14. sarvendriyaguṇābhāsaṃ  
sarvendriyavivarjitam  
asaktaṃ sarvabhṛc cai 'va  
nirguṇaṃ guṇabhoktṛ ca
15. bahir āntaś ca bhūtānām  
acaraṃ caram eva ca  
sūkṣmatvāt tad avijñeyaṃ  
dūrasthaṃ cā 'ntike ca tat
16. avibhaktaṃ ca bhūteṣu  
vibhaktaṃ iva ca sthitam  
bhūtabhartr ca taj jñeyaṃ  
grasiṣṇu prabhaviṣṇu ca
17. jyotiṣām api taj jyotis  
tamaś param ucyate  
jñānaṃ jñeyaṃ jñānagamyam  
hṛdi sarvasya dhiṣṭhitam

9. Absence of attachment and of great affection  
For sons, wife, house, and the like,  
And constant indifference of mind,  
Whether desired or undesired things occur;
10. With single-minded discipline, towards Me  
Devotion unswerving;  
Cultivation of solitary places,  
Dislike for a crowd of people;
11. Constancy in the knowledge of the over-soul,  
Perception of the object <sup>4</sup> of knowledge of the truth: —  
This (all) is called knowledge;  
Ignorance is what is other than that.
12. What is the object of knowledge, that I shall declare,  
Knowing which one attains freedom from death:  
(It is) the beginningless Brahman, ruled by Me<sup>5</sup>;  
Neither existent nor non-existent it is called.
13. It has hands and feet on all sides,  
Eyes, heads, and faces <sup>6</sup> on all sides,  
Hearing <sup>7</sup> on all sides in the world,  
And it remains constantly enveloping all;
14. Having the semblance <sup>8</sup> of the qualities of all the senses,  
(Yet) freed from all the senses,  
Unattached, and yet all-maintaining;  
Free from the Strands, yet experiencing the Strands (of matter);
15. Outside of beings, and within them,  
Unmoving, and yet moving;  
Because of its subtleness it cannot be comprehended:  
Both far away and near it is.
16. Both undivided in beings,  
And seemingly divided it remains;  
Both as the supporter of beings it is to be known,  
And as (their) consumer and originator.
17. Of lights also it is the light <sup>9</sup>  
Beyond darkness, so 'tis declared;  
Knowledge, the object of knowledge, and the goal of knowledge;<sup>10</sup>  
(It is) settled <sup>11</sup> in the heart of all.

18. iti kṣetram tathā jñānam  
jñeyam co 'ktaṁ samāsataḥ  
madbhakta etad vijñāya  
madbhāvāyo 'papadyate
19. prakṛtiṁ puruṣaṁ cai 'va  
viddhy anādī ubhāv api  
vikārāṁś ca guṇāṁś cai 'va  
viddhi prakṛtisambhavan
20. kāryakaraṇakartṛtve  
hetuḥ prakṛtir ucyate  
puruṣaḥ sukhaduḥkhānām  
bhoktṛtve hetur ucyate
21. puruṣaḥ prakṛtistho hi  
bhuṅkte prakṛtijān guṇān  
kāraṇaṁ guṇasaṅgo 'sya  
sadasadyonijanmasu
22. upadraṣṭā 'numantā ca  
bhartā bhoktā maheśvaraḥ  
paramātme 'ti cā 'py ukto  
dehe 'smin puruṣaḥ paraḥ
23. ya evaṁ vetti puruṣaṁ  
prakṛtiṁ ca guṇaiḥ saha  
sarvathā vartamāno 'pi  
na sa bhūyo 'bhijāyate
24. dhyānenā 'tmani paśyanti  
kecid ātmānam ātmanā  
anye sāmkyena yogena  
karmayogena cā 'pare
25. anye tv evaṁ ajānantaḥ  
śrutvā 'nyebhya upāsate  
te 'pi cā 'titaranty eva  
mrtyuṁ śrutiparāyaṇāḥ
26. yāvat saṁjāyate kiṁcit  
sattvaṁ sthāvarajaṅgamam  
kṣetrakṣetrajañasaṁyogāt  
tad viddhi bharatarṣabha



18. Thus the Field, and also knowledge,  
And the object of knowledge have been declared in brief;  
My devotee, understanding this,  
Attains unto <sup>12</sup> My estate.
19. Both material nature and the spirit,  
Know thou, are equally beginningless;  
Both the modifications and the Strands,  
Know thou, spring from material nature.
20. In anything that concerns effect, instrument, or agent, <sup>13</sup>  
Material nature is declared the cause;  
The spirit, in pleasure-and-pain's  
Experiencing is declared the cause.
21. For the spirit, abiding in material nature,  
Experiences the Strands born of material nature;  
Attachment to the Strands is the cause of his  
Births in good and evil wombs.
22. The onlooker and consentor,  
The supporter, experiencer, great Lord,  
The supreme soul also is declared to be  
The highest spirit, in this body.
23. Whoso thus knows the spirit  
And material nature along with its Strands,  
Tho he exist in any condition at all, <sup>14</sup>  
He is not reborn again.
24. By meditation, in the self see  
Some the self by the self;  
Others by discipline of reason, <sup>15</sup>  
And others by discipline of action.
25. But others, not having this knowledge,  
Hearing it from others, revere it;  
Even they also, nevertheless, cross over  
Death, devoted to the holy revelation <sup>16</sup> which they hear.
26. In so far as is produced any  
Creature, stationary or moving,  
From union of Field and Field-knower  
Know that (is sprung), best of Bharatas.

27. samam sarveṣu bhūteṣu  
tiṣṭhantaṁ parameśvaram  
vinaśyatsv avinaśyantaṁ  
yaḥ paśyati sa paśyati
28. samam paśyan hi sarvatra  
samavasthitam Iśvaram  
na hinasty ātmanā 'tmānam  
tato yāti parāṁ gatim
29. prakṛtyai 'va ca karmāṇi  
kriyamāṇāni sarvaśaḥ  
yaḥ paśyati tathā 'tmānam  
akartāraṁ sa paśyati
30. yadā bhūtaprthagbhāvam  
ekastham anupaśyati  
tata eva ca vistāraṁ  
brahma sampadyate tadā
31. anāditvān nirguṇatvāt  
paramātmā 'yam avyayaḥ  
śarīrastho 'pi kaunteya  
na karoti na lipyate
32. yathā sarvagataṁ saukṣmyād  
ākāśaṁ no 'palipyate  
sarvatrā 'vasthito 'cche  
tathā 'tmā no 'palipyate
33. yathā prakāśayaty ekaḥ  
kṛtsnaṁ lokam imaṁ raviḥ  
kṣetraṁ kṣetrī tathā kṛtsnaṁ  
prakāśayati bhārata
34. kṣetrakṣetrajñayor evaṁ  
antaraṁ jñānacakṣuṣā  
bhūtaprakṛtimokṣaṁ ca  
ye vidur yānti te param
- iti kṣetrakṣetrajñavibhāgayogo nāma trayodaśo 'dhyāyaḥ

27. Alike in all beings  
 Abiding, the supreme Lord,  
 Not perishing when they perish,  
 Who sees him, he (truly) sees.
28. For seeing in all the same  
 Lord established,  
 He harms not himself (in others)<sup>17</sup> by himself;  
 Then he goes to the highest goal.
29. Both that by material-nature alone actions  
 Are performed altogether,  
 Who sees, and likewise that (his) self  
 Is not the doer, he (truly) sees.
30. When the various states of beings  
 He perceives as abiding in One,  
 And from that alone their expansion,  
 Then he attains Brahman.
31. Because he is beginningless and free from the Strands,  
 This supreme self, imperishable,  
 Even abiding in the body, son of Kuntī,  
 Acts not, nor is he stained (by actions).<sup>18</sup>
32. As because of its subtleness the omnipresent  
 Ether is not stained (by contact with other elements),  
 Abiding in every body  
 The self is not stained likewise.
33. As alone illumines  
 This whole world the sun,  
 So the Field-owner the whole Field  
 Illumines, son of Bharata.
34. Thus between Field and Field-knower  
 The difference, with the eye of knowledge,  
 And release from the material nature of beings,  
 Those who know (these), they go to the highest.

Here ends the Thirteenth Chapter, called Discipline of Distinction of Field and Field-knower.

## XIV

śrībhagavān uvāca

1. param bhūyaḥ pravakṣyāmi  
jñānānāṃ jñānam uttamam  
yaj jñātvā munayaḥ sarve  
parāṃ siddhim ito gatāḥ
2. idaṃ jñānam upāśritya  
mama sādharṃyam āgatāḥ  
sarge 'pi no 'pajāyante  
pralaye na vyathanti ca
3. mama yonir mahad brahma  
tasmin garbhaṃ dadhāmy aham  
saṃbhavaḥ sarvabhūtānāṃ  
tato bhavati bhārata
4. sarvayoniṣu kaunteya  
mūrtayaḥ saṃbhavanti yāḥ  
tāsāṃ brahma mahad yonir  
aham bījapradāḥ pitā
5. sattvaṃ rajas tama iti  
guṇāḥ prakṛtisambhavāḥ  
nibadhnanti mahābāho  
dehe dehinam avyayam
6. tatra sattvaṃ nirmalatvāt  
prakāśakam anāmayam  
sukhasaṅgena badhnāti  
jñānasaṅgena cā 'nagha
7. rajo rāgātmakam viddhi  
tṛṣṇāsaṅgasamudbhavam  
tan nibadhnāti kaunteya  
karmasaṅgena dehinam
8. tamas tv ajñānajaṃ viddhi  
mohanam sarvadehinām  
pramādālasyanidrābhis  
tan nibadhnāti bhārata

## CHAPTER XIV

The Blessed One said:

1. Further I shall declare the highest  
Knowledge, the best of all knowledges,  
Knowing which all saints  
Have gone from this world to supreme perfection.
2. Having resorted to this knowledge,  
Come to a state of likeness with Me,  
Even at a world-creation they do not come to birth,  
Nor at a dissolution are they disturbed.
3. For Me great Brahman is a womb;  
Therein I plant the germ;  
The origin of all beings  
Comes from that, son of Bharata.
4. In all wombs, son of Kuntī,  
Whatsoever forms originate,  
Of them great Brahman is the womb,  
I am the father that furnishes the seed.
5. Goodness, passion, and darkness,  
The Strands that spring from material nature,  
Bind, O great-armed one,  
In the body the immortal embodied (soul).
6. Among these goodness, because it is stainless,  
Is illuminating and free from disease;  
It binds by attachment to bliss,  
And by attachment to knowledge, blameless one.
7. Know that passion is of the nature of desire,  
Springing from thirst and attachment;  
It, son of Kuntī, binds  
The embodied (soul) by attachment to actions.
8. But know that darkness is born of ignorance,  
The deluder of all embodied (souls);  
By heedlessness, sloth, and sleep  
It binds, son of Bharata.

9. sattvaṃ sukhe sañjayati  
rajaḥ karmaṇi bhārata  
jñānam āvṛtya tu tamaḥ  
pramāde sañjayaty uta
10. rajas tamaś cā 'bhibhūya  
sattvaṃ bhavati bhārata  
rajaḥ sattvaṃ tamaś cai 'va  
tamaḥ sattvaṃ rajas tathā
11. sarvadvāreṣu dehe 'smin  
prakāśa upajāyate  
jñānaṃ yadā tadā vidyād  
vivṛddhaṃ sattvaṃ ity uta
12. lobhaḥ pravṛttir ārambhaḥ  
karmaṇām aśamaḥ sprhā  
rajasy etāni jāyante  
vivṛddhe bharatarṣabha
13. aprakāśo 'pravṛttiś ca  
pramādo moha eva ca  
tamasy etāni jāyante  
vivṛddhe kurunandana
14. yadā sattve pravṛddhe tu  
pralayaṃ yāti dehabhṛt  
tado 'ttamavidāṃ lokān  
amalān pratipadyate
15. rajasi pralayaṃ gatvā  
karmaśaṅgiṣu jāyate  
tathā pralīnas tamasi  
mūḍhayoniṣu jāyate
16. karmaṇaḥ sukr̥tasyā 'huḥ  
sāttvikaṃ nirmalaṃ phalam  
rajasas tu phalaṃ duḥkham  
ajñānaṃ tamaś phalam
17. sāttvāt saṃjāyate jñānaṃ  
rajaso lobha eva ca  
pramādamohau tamaś  
bhavato 'jñānaṃ eva ca

9. Goodness causes attachment to bliss,  
Passion to action, son of Bharata,  
But darkness, obscuring knowledge,  
Causes attachment to heedlessness likewise.
10. Prevailing over passion and darkness,  
Goodness comes to be, son of Bharata;  
Passion, (prevailing over) goodness and darkness likewise,  
And so darkness, (prevailing over) goodness and passion.
11. In all the gates (orifices) in this body  
An illumination appears,  
Which is knowledge; when that happens, then one shall know  
Also that goodness is dominant,
12. Greed, activity, the undertaking  
Of actions, unrest, longing,  
These are produced when passion  
Is dominant, bull of Bharatas.
13. Unillumination, and inactivity,  
Heedlessness, and mere delusion,  
These are produced when darkness  
Is dominant, son of Kuru.
14. But when under dominance of goodness  
The body-bearing (soul) goes to dissolution,  
Then to the worlds of them that know the highest,  
The spotless (worlds), he attains.
15. Going to dissolution in (dominance of) passion,  
He is born among those attached to actions;  
And so when dissolved in (dominance of) darkness,  
He is born in deluded wombs.
16. Of action well done, they say  
The fruit is spotless and of the nature of goodness;  
But the fruit of passion is pain;  
The fruit of darkness is ignorance.
17. From goodness is born knowledge,  
From passion greed rather,  
Heedlessness and delusion from darkness  
Arise, and ignorance.

18. ūrdhvaṃ gacchanti sattvasthā  
madhye tiṣṭhanti rājasāḥ  
jaghanyaguṇavṛttisthā  
adho gacchanti tāmasāḥ
19. nā 'nyam guṇebhyaḥ kartāraṃ  
yadā draṣṭā 'nupaśyati  
guṇebhyaś ca paraṃ vetti  
madbhāvaṃ so 'dhigacchati
20. guṇān etān atītya trīn  
dehī dehasamudbhavān  
janmamṛtyujarāduḥkhair  
vimukto 'mṛtam aśnute
- arjuna uvāca
21. kair liṅgais trīn guṇān etān  
atīto bhavati prabho  
kimācāraḥ katham cai 'tāps  
trīn guṇān ativartate
- śrībhagavān uvāca
22. prakāśaṃ ca pravṛttiṃ ca  
mohaṃ eva ca pāṇḍava  
na dveṣṭi saṃpravṛttāni  
na nivṛttāni kāṅkṣati
23. udāsīnavad āsīno  
guṇair yo na vicālyate  
guṇā vartanta ity eva  
yo 'vatiṣṭhati ne 'ṅgate
24. samaduḥkhasukhaḥ svasthaḥ  
samaśoṣṭāśmakāñcanaḥ  
tulyapriyāpriyo dhīras  
tulyanindātmasamstutiḥ
25. mānāpamānayos tulyas  
tulyo mitrāripakṣayor  
sarvārambhaparitāgi  
guṇātītaḥ sa ucyate



18. Those that abide in goodness go on high;  
 The men of passion remain in the middle (states);  
 Abiding in the scope of the base Strand,  
 The men of darkness go below.
19. No other agent than the Strands  
 When the Beholder (soul) perceives,  
 And knows the higher-than-the-Strands,  
 He goes unto My estate.
20. Transcending these three Strands,  
 That spring from the body,<sup>1</sup> the embodied (soul),  
 From birth, death, old age, and sorrow  
 Freed, attains deathlessness.

Arjuna said:

21. By what marks, when these three Strands  
 He has transcended, is he characterized, O Lord?  
 What is his conduct, and how these  
 Three Strands does he get beyond?

The Blessed One said:

22. Both illumination and activity  
 And delusion,<sup>2</sup> son of Pāṇḍu,  
 He does not loathe when they have arisen,  
 Nor crave when they have ceased.
23. Sitting as one sitting apart (indifferent),  
 Who is not perturbed by the Strands,  
 Thinking 'The Strands operate' only,  
 Who remains firm and is unshaken,
24. To whom pain and pleasure are alike, abiding in the self,  
 To whom clods, stones, and gold are all one,  
 To whom loved and unloved are equal, wise,<sup>3</sup>  
 To whom blame and praise of himself are equal,
25. Alike to honor and disgrace,  
 Alike to parties of friend and foe,  
 Abandoning all undertakings,  
 He is called the man that has transcended the Strands.

26. māṃ ca yo 'vyabhicāreṇa  
bhaktiyogena sevate  
sa guṇān samatītyai 'tān  
brahmabhūyāya kalpate

27. brahmaṇo hi pratiṣṭhā 'ham  
amṛtasyā 'vyayasya ca  
śāśvatasya ca dharmasya  
sukhasyai 'kāntikasya ca

iti guṇatrayavibhāgayogo nāma caturdaśo 'dhyāyaḥ

26. And whoso Me with unswerving  
Discipline of devotion serves,  
He, transcending these Strands,  
Is fit for becoming Brahman.
27. For I am the foundation of Brahman,  
The immortal and imperishable,  
And of the eternal right,  
And of absolute bliss.

Here ends the Fourteenth Chapter, called Discipline of Distinction of the  
Three Strands

## XV

śrībhagavān uvāca

1. ūrdhvamūlam adhaḥśākham  
aśvattham prāhur avyayam  
chandāmsi yasya parṇāni  
yas taṃ veda sa vedavit
2. adhaś co 'rdhvaṃ prasṛtās tasya śākhā  
guṇappravṛddhā viṣayappravālāḥ  
adhaś ca mūlāny anusaṃtatāni  
karmānubandhīni manuṣyaloke
3. na rūpam asye 'ha tatho 'palabhyate  
nā 'nto na cā 'dir na ca saṃpratiṣṭhā  
aśvattham enaṃ suvirūḍhamūlam  
asaṅgaśastreṇa dṛḍhena chittvā
4. tataḥ padam tat parimārgitavyaṃ  
yasmin gatā na nivartanti bhūyaḥ  
tam eva cā 'dyaṃ puruṣaṃ prapadye  
yataḥ pravṛttiḥ prasṛtā purāṇī
5. nirmānamohā jītasāṅgadoṣā  
adhyātmanityā vinivṛttakāmāḥ  
dvandvair vimuktāḥ sukhaduḥkhasaṃjñair  
gacchanty amūḍhāḥ padam avyayaṃ tat
6. na tad bhāsayate sūryo  
na śasāṅko na pāvakaḥ  
yad gatvā na nivartante  
tad dhāma paramaṃ mama
7. mamai 'vā 'ṃso jīvaloke  
jīvabhūtaḥ sanātanaḥ  
manaḥsaṣṭhānī 'ndriyāṇi  
prakṛtisthāni karṣati
8. śarīraṃ yad avāpnoti  
yac cā 'py ūtkrāmatī 'śvaraḥ  
grhītvai 'tāni saṃyāti  
vāyur gandhān ivā 'śayāt

## CHAPTER XV

The Blessed One said:

1. With roots aloft and branches below,  
The eternal peepal-tree,<sup>1</sup> they say —  
Whose leaves are the (Vedic) hymns,  
Who knows it, he knows the Veda.
2. Below and upward extend its branches,  
Nourished by the Strands, with the objects of sense as sprouts;  
Below also are stretched forth its roots,  
Resulting in actions, in the world of men.
3. Its form is not thus comprehended here in the world,  
Nor its end nor beginning nor basis.  
This peepal-tree, with its firmly grown roots, <sup>६</sup>  
Cutting with the stout axe of detachment,
4. Then that place must be sought  
To which having gone men no more return,  
(Thinking:) 'I take refuge in that same primal spirit,  
Whence issued forth of old the (whole cosmic) activity.'
5. Without pride or delusion, victors over the sin of attachment,  
Constant in the over-soul, their desires departed,  
Freed from the pairs known as pleasure and pain,  
Undeluded men go to that eternal place.
6. The sun does not illumine that,  
Nor the moon, nor fire;  
Having gone to which they return not:  
That is My highest station.<sup>2</sup>
7. A part just of Me in the world of the living  
Becomes the individual-soul, the eternal;  
The (five) senses, with the thought-organ as sixth,  
Which rest in material nature, it draws along.
8. When he acquires a body,  
And also when he departs (from it), the Lord<sup>3</sup>  
Moves taking them along,  
As the wind odors from their home.

9. śrotraṃ cakṣuḥ sparśanaṃ ca  
rasanaṃ ghrāṇaṃ eva ca  
adhiṣṭhāya manaś cā 'yaṃ  
viṣayān upasevate
10. utkrāmantam sthitaṃ vā 'pi  
bhuñjanaṃ vā guṇānvitam  
vimūḍhā nā 'nupaśyanti  
paśyanti jñānacakṣuṣaḥ
11. yatanto yoginaś cai 'naṃ  
paśyanty ātmany avasthitaṃ  
yatanto 'py akṛtātmāno  
nai 'naṃ paśyanty acetasaḥ
12. yad ādityagataṃ tejo  
jagad bhāsayate 'khilam  
yac candramasi yac cā 'gnau  
tat tejo viddhi māmakam
13. gām āviśya ca bhūtāni  
dhārayāmy aham ojasā  
puṣṇāmi cau 'śadhīḥ sarvāḥ  
somo bhūtvā rasātmakaḥ
14. ahaṃ vaiśvānaro bhūtvā  
prāṇināṃ deham āśritaḥ  
prāṇāpānasamāyuktaḥ  
pacāmy annaṃ caturvidham
15. sarvasya cā 'haṃ hṛdi saṃniviṣṭo  
mattaḥ smṛtir jñānam apohanaṃ ca  
vedaś ca sarvair aham eva vedyo  
vedāntakṛd vedavid eva cā 'ham
16. dvāv imau puruṣau loke  
kṣaraś cā 'kṣara eva ca  
kṣaraḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni  
kūṭastho 'kṣara ucyate
17. uttamaḥ puruṣas tv anyaḥ  
paramātme 'ty udāhṛtaḥ  
yo lokatrayam āviśya  
bibharty avyaya īśvaraḥ

9. Hearing, sight, and touch,  
Taste, and smell,  
Making use of <sup>4</sup> these, and the thought-organ, he  
Devotes himself to the objects of sense.
10. As he departs (from the body) or remains (in it),  
Or experiences (sense-objects), while attended by the Strands,  
Deluded men do not perceive him;  
Those whose eye is knowledge perceive him.
11. Him also men of discipline, earnestly striving,  
Perceive located in their self;  
(But) even tho they strive, those whose self is unperfected  
Perceive him not, the fools.
12. The splendor that belongs to the sun,  
Which illumines the whole world,  
And that which is in the moon and in fire,  
Know that to be My splendor.
13. And entering into the earth, (all) beings  
I maintain by (My) power;  
And I nourish all plants,  
Becoming the juicy soma (sacred plant and moon, identified).
14. I, becoming the (digestive) fire of all men,  
Dwelling in the body of (all) living beings,  
In union with the upper and nether breaths  
Cook (digest) their food of all four sorts.
15. I am entered into the heart of every one;  
From Me come memory, knowledge, and disputation;  
I alone am that which is to be known by all the Vedas;  
And I am the author of the Upaniṣads and the Vedas' knower.
16. Here in the world are two spirits,  
The perishable, and the imperishable;  
The perishable is all beings;  
The imperishable is called the immovable.<sup>5</sup>
17. But there is a highest spirit, other (than this),  
Called the Supreme Soul;  
Which, entering into the three worlds,  
Supports them, the undying Lord.

18. yasmāt kṣaram atīto 'ham  
 akṣarād api co 'ttamaḥ  
 ato 'smi loke vede ca  
 prathitaḥ puruṣottamaḥ

19. yo mām evam asaṁmūḍho  
 jñāti puruṣottamam  
 sa sarvavid bhajati mām  
 sarvabhāvena bhārata

20. iti guhyatamaṁ śāstram  
 idam uktaṁ mayā 'nagha  
 etad buddhvā buddhimān syāt  
 kṛtakṛtyaś ca bhārata

iti puruṣottamayogo nāma pañcadaśo 'dhyāyaḥ



18. Since I transcend the perishable,  
And am higher than the imperishable too,  
Therefore in the world and the Veda I am  
Proclaimed as the highest spirit.
19. The man who, undeluded, thus Me  
Knows as the supreme spirit,  
He knows all, and devotes himself to Me  
With his whole being, son of Bharata.
20. Thus the most secret science  
Has now been declared by Me, blameless one;  
Being enlightened as to this, a man would have true enlightenment,  
And would have done all there is to do, son of Bharata.
- Here ends the Fifteenth Chapter, called Discipline of the Highest Spirit.

## XVI

śrībhagavān uvāca

1. abhayam sattvasaṃsuddhir  
jñānayogavyavasthitiḥ  
dānam damaś ca yajñaś ca  
svādhyāyas tapa ārjavam
2. ahimsā satyam akrodhas  
tyāgaḥ śāntir apaisunam  
dayā bhūteṣv aloluptvam  
mārdavam hrīr acāpalam
3. tejaḥ kṣamā dhṛtiḥ śaucam  
adroho nā 'timānitā  
bhavanti sampadam daivīm  
abhijātasya bhārata
4. dambho darpo 'timānaś ca  
krodhaḥ pārūṣyam eva ca  
ajñānam cā 'bhijātasya  
pārtha sampadam āsurīm
5. daivī sampad vimokṣāya  
nibandhāyā 'surī matā  
mā śucaḥ sampadam daivīm  
abhijāto 'si pāṇḍava
6. dvau bhūtasargau loka 'smin  
daiva āsura eva ca  
daivo vistaraśaḥ prokta  
āsuram pārtha me śṛṇu
7. pravṛttim ca nivṛttim ca  
janā na vidur āsurāḥ  
na śaucam nā 'pi cā 'cāro  
na satyam teṣu vidyate
8. asatyam apratiṣṭham te  
jagad āhur anīśvaram  
aparapasaraṃbhūtam  
kim anyat kāmahaitukam

## CHAPTER XVI

The Blessed One said:

1. Fearlessness, purification of essence,  
Steadfastness in the discipline of knowledge,  
Generosity, control, and religious worship,  
Study of the Holy Word, austerities, uprightness,
2. Harmlessness, truth, no anger,  
Abandonment,<sup>1</sup> serenity, no backbiting,  
Compassion towards creatures, no greedy desire,  
Gentleness, modesty, no fickleness,
3. Majesty, patience, fortitude, purity,  
No injuriousness, no excessive pride,  
Are (the qualities) of him that to the divine lot  
Is born, son of Bharata.
4. Hypocrisy, arrogance, overweening pride,  
Wrath, and harshness (of speech) too,  
And ignorance, are (the qualities) of him that is born  
To the demoniac lot, son of Pṛthā.
5. The divine lot leads to release,  
The demoniac lot is considered to lead to bondage.  
Be not grieved: to the divine lot  
Thou art born, son of Pāṇḍu.
6. There are two creations of beings in this world,  
The divine and the demoniac.  
The divine has been explained at length;  
Hear from Me of the demoniac, son of Pṛthā.
7. Both activity and its cessation <sup>2</sup>  
Demoniac folk know not;  
Neither purity nor yet good conduct  
Nor truth is found in them.
8. Without truth, without religious basis, they  
Say is the world, without a God,  
Not originating in regular mutual causation;  
In short, motivated by desire alone.

9. etāṃ dṛṣṭim avaṣṭabhya  
naṣṭātmāno 'lpabuddhayaḥ  
prabhavanty ugrakarmāṇaḥ  
kṣayāya jagato 'hitāḥ
10. kāmam āśritya duṣpūraṃ  
dambhamānamadānvitāḥ  
mohād gr̥hītvā 'sadgrāhān  
pravartante 'śucivratāḥ
11. cintām aparimeyāṃ ca  
pralayāntām upāśritāḥ  
kāmapabhogaparamā  
etāvad iti niścītāḥ
12. āśāpāśaśatair baddhāḥ  
kāmakrodhaparāyaṇāḥ  
ihante kāmabhogārtham  
anyāyenā 'rthasaṃcayān
13. idam adya mayā labdham  
imaṃ prāpsyē manoratham  
idam astī 'dam api me  
bhaviṣyati punar dhanam
14. asau mayā hataḥ śatrur  
haniṣyē cā 'parān api  
īśvaro 'ham ahaṃ bhogī  
siddho 'haṃ balavān sukhi
15. ādhyo 'bhijanavān asmi  
ko 'nyo 'sti sadṛśo mayā  
yakṣye dāsyāmi modiṣya  
ity ajñānavimohitāḥ
16. anekacittavibhrāntā  
mohajālasamāvṛtāḥ  
prasaktāḥ kāmabhogeṣu  
patanti narake 'śucau
17. ātmasaṃbhāvitāḥ stabdhā  
dhanamānamadānvitāḥ  
yajante nāmayaññais te  
dambhenā 'vidhipūrvakam

9. Holding fast to this view,  
Men of lost souls, of scant intelligence,  
Spring up, committing cruel deeds,  
Unto the ruin of the world, noxious folk.
10. Clinging to insatiable desire,  
Filled with hypocrisy, arrogance, and pride,  
Thru delusion taking up false notions,<sup>3</sup>  
They proceed with unclean undertakings.
11. To limitless care,  
That lasts until death, they are devoted;  
They make the enjoyment of desires their highest aim,  
Convinced that that is all;
12. Bound by hundreds of bonds of longing,  
Devoted to desire and wrath,  
In order to enjoy desires, they seek  
Hoardings of wealth by wrong means.
13. 'This have I gained today,  
This desire I shall get,  
Mine is this, and mine also this  
Wealth again is going to be;
14. 'Yonder enemy has been slain by me,  
And I shall slay others too;  
I am lord, I control enjoyments,  
I am successful, mighty, happy;
15. 'I am rich, of noble birth;  
Who else is like unto me?  
I shall sacrifice and give gifts, and rejoice!  
Thus they say, deluded by ignorance.
16. Led astray by many fancies,  
Enveloped by the snares of delusion,  
Intent on the enjoyment of desires,  
They fall to a foul hell.
17. Self-conceited, haughty,  
Full of pride and arrogance of wealth,<sup>4</sup>  
They do acts of religious worship in name alone,  
Hypocritically, not according to the (Vedic) injunctions.

18. ahaṁkāraṁ balaṁ darpaṁ  
 kāmaṁ krodhaṁ ca saṁśritāḥ  
 mām ātmaparadeheṣu  
 pradviṣanto 'bhyasūyakāḥ
19. tān ahaṁ dviṣataḥ krūrān  
 saṁsāreṣu narādhamān  
 kṣipāmy ajasram aśubhān  
 āsuriṣv eva yoniṣu
20. āsurīm yonim āpannā  
 mūḍhā janmani-janmani  
 mām aprāpyai 'va kaunteya  
 tato yānty adhamām gatim
21. trividhaṁ narakasye 'daṁ  
 dvāraṁ nāśanam ātmanaḥ  
 kāmaḥ krodhas tathā lobhas  
 tasmād etat trayaṁ tyajet
22. etair vimuktaḥ kaunteya  
 tamodvārais tribhīr naraḥ  
 ācaraty ātmanaḥ śreyas  
 tato yāti parām gatim
23. yaḥ śāstravidhim utsrjya  
 vartate kāmakārataḥ  
 na sa siddhim avāpnoti  
 na sukhaṁ na parām gatim
24. tasmāc chāstraṁ pramāṇam te  
 kāryākāryavyavasthitau  
 jñātvā śāstravidhānoktaṁ  
 karma kartum ihā 'rhasi
- iti daivāsurasampadvibhāgayogo nāma ṣoḍaśo 'dhyāyaḥ

18. Egotism, force, pride,  
Desire, and wrath they have taken to,  
Me in their own and others' bodies  
Hating, these envious men.
19. These cruel and hateful  
Base men, in the ceaseless round of existences,<sup>5</sup>  
These wicked ones, I constantly hurl  
Into demoniac wombs alone.
20. Having come into a demoniac womb,  
Deluded in birth after birth,  
Not by any means attaining Me, son of Kuntī,  
Then they go to the lowest goal.
21. This is of hell the threefold  
Gate, and ruins the soul:  
Desire, wrath, and greed;  
Hence one should abandon these three.
22. Freed, son of Kuntī, from these  
Three gates of darkness, a man  
Does what is good for his soul;  
Then he goes to the highest goal.
23. Whoso neglects the law's injunction,  
And lives according to his own wilful desires,  
He does not attain perfection,  
Nor bliss, nor the highest goal.
24. Therefore let the law be thy authority  
In determining what should and should not be done.  
Knowing (action) laid down in the law's injunctions,  
Thou shouldst do (such) action in this world.

Here ends the Sixteenth Chapter, called Discipline of Distinction between Divine and Demoniac Lots.

## XVII

arjuna uvāca

1. ye śāstravidhim utsṛjya  
yajante śraddhayā 'nvitāḥ  
teṣāṃ niṣṭhā tu kā kṛṣṇa  
sattvam āho rajas tamaḥ

śrībhagavān uvāca

2. trividhā bhavati śraddhā  
dehināṃ sā svabhāvajā  
sāttvikī rājasī cai 'va  
tāmasī ce 'ti tāṃ śṛṇu
3. sattvānurūpā sarvasya  
śraddhā bhavati bhārata  
śraddhāmayo 'yaṃ puruṣo  
yo yacchraddhaḥ sa eva saḥ
4. yajante sāttvikā devān  
yakṣarakṣāṃsi rājasāḥ  
pretān bhūtagaṇāṃś cā 'nye  
yajante tāmasā janāḥ
5. aśāstravīhitam ghoram  
tapyante ye tapo janāḥ  
dambhāhaṃkārasamyuktāḥ  
kāmarāgabalanvitāḥ
6. karṣayantaḥ śarīrasthaṃ  
bhūtagrāmam acetasaḥ  
māṃ cai 'vā 'ntaḥśarīrasthaṃ  
tān viddhy āsuraniścayān
7. āhāras tv api sarvasya  
trividho bhavati priyaḥ  
yajñas tapas tathā dānam  
teṣāṃ bhedaṃ imaṃ śṛṇu
8. āyusattvabalārogya-  
sukhaprītivivardhanāḥ  
rasyāḥ snigdhaḥ sthirā hṛdyā  
āhārāḥ sāttvikapriyāḥ



## CHAPTER XVII

Arjuna said:

1. Those who, neglecting the law's injunction,  
Perform acts of worship filled with faith, —  
What, however, is their basis, Kṛṣṇa?  
Goodness, or passion, or darkness?

The Blessed One said:

2. Of three kinds is the faith  
Of embodied (souls); it springs from their original nature;  
It is characterized by goodness, or passion,  
Or darkness. Hear how it is!
3. In accord with the essential nature of every man  
Is his faith, son of Bharata.  
Man here is made up of faith;  
As a man's faith is, just so is he.
4. Men of goodness worship the gods,  
Men of passion sprites and ogres,  
To ghosts and the hordes of goblins others,  
The folk of darkness, pay worship.
5. Not enjoined in the law, cruel  
Austerities — folk who practise them,  
Wedded to hypocrisy and egotism,  
Filled with desire, passion, and violence,<sup>1</sup>
6. Starving within the body  
The conglomerate of elements, the fools,  
And (starving) Me Myself, who am within the body,  
Know that they have demoniac resolve.
7. But the food also, of every man  
Beloved, is of three kinds;  
Likewise their worship, austerities, and gifts;  
Hear now the distinction between them.
8. Life, courage, strength, good health,  
Happiness, and satisfaction increasing,  
Tasty, rich, substantial, and heart-gladdening,  
Such foods are beloved of the man of goodness.

9. kaṭvamlalavaṇātyuṣṇa-  
tikṣṇarūkṣavidāhinaḥ  
āhārā rājasasye 'ṣṭā  
duḥkhaśokāmayapradāḥ
10. yātayāmaṃ gatarasaṃ  
pūti paryuṣitaṃ ca yat  
ucchiṣṭaṃ api cā 'medhyaṃ  
bhojanaṃ tāmasapriyaṃ
11. aphaḷākāṅkṣibhir yajño  
vidhidṛṣṭo ya iyyate  
yaṣṭavyaṃ eve 'ti manaḥ  
samādhāya sa sāttvikaḥ
12. abhisamdhāya tu phalaṃ  
dambhārthaṃ api cai 'va yat  
iyyate bhārataśreṣṭha  
taṃ yajñaṃ vidhi rājasam
13. vidhihīnaṃ asṛṣṭānnaṃ  
mantrahīnaṃ adakṣiṇaṃ  
śraddhāvirahitaṃ yajñaṃ  
tāmasaṃ paricakṣate
14. devadvijaguruprājña-  
pūjanaṃ śaucam ārjavam  
brahmacaryaṃ ahimsā ca  
śārīraṃ tapa ucyate
15. anudvegakaraṃ vākyaṃ  
satyaṃ priyahitaṃ ca yat  
svādhyāyābhyasanaṃ cai 'va  
vāñmayaṃ tapa ucyate
16. manaḥprasādaḥ saumyatvaṃ  
maunaṃ ātmavinigrahaḥ  
bhāvasaṃśuddhir ity etat  
tapo mānasam ucyate
17. śraddhayā parayā taptaṃ  
tapas tat trividhaṃ naraiḥ  
aphaḷākāṅkṣibhir yuktaiḥ  
sāttvikaṃ paricakṣate

9. Pungent, sour, salty, very hot,  
Sharp, astringent, heating,  
Such foods are desired of the man of passion;  
They cause pain, misery, and sickness.
10. Spoiled, its taste lost,  
Putrid, and stale,  
Leavings, and also filth,  
Such food is beloved of the man of darkness.
11. By men who are not desirous of fruits, worship  
Which is offered as contemplated by injunctions,  
With the thought that it is simply one's duty to offer it, the mind  
Concentrating, that is of goodness.
12. But with a view to the fruit,  
And also if for mere hypocritical ostentation  
It is offered, O best of Bharatas,  
That worship know to be of passion.
13. In which no injunction is observed nor food given out,  
No holy texts recited nor sacrificial fee paid,  
Devoid of faith, such worship  
They say is of darkness.
14. To gods, brahmans, reverend elders, and wise men  
Respectful homage; purity, uprightness,  
Chastity, and harmlessness;  
This is called austerity of the body.
15. Words that cause no disturbance,  
That are true, and pleasingly beneficial;  
Also practice of recitation in study (of sacred texts);  
This is called austerity of speech.
16. Serenity of mind, kindliness,  
Silence, self-control,  
And purification of being, this  
Is called austerity of mind.
17. With the highest faith performed,  
This threefold austerity, by men  
Not seeking fruits and disciplined,  
They call (austerity) of goodness.

18. satkāramānapūjārthaṃ  
tapo dambhena ca 'va yat  
kriyate tad iha proktaṃ  
rājasam calam adhravam
19. mūḍhagrāheṇā 'tmano yat  
pīḍayā kriyate tapaḥ  
parasyo 'tsādanārthaṃ vā  
tat tāmasam udāhṛtam
20. dātavyam iti yad dānaṃ  
dīyate 'nupakāriṇe  
deśe kāle ca pātre ca  
tad dānaṃ sāttvikam smṛtam
21. yat tu pratyupakārārthaṃ  
phalam uddīśya vā punaḥ  
dīyate ca parikliṣṭam  
tad dānaṃ rājasam smṛtam
22. adeśakāle yad dānam  
apātrebhyaś ca dīyate  
asatkṛtam avajñātaṃ  
tat tāmasam udāhṛtam
23. om tat sad iti nirdeśo  
brahmaṇas trividhaḥ smṛtaḥ  
brāhmaṇās tena vedāś ca  
yajñāś ca vihitāḥ purā
24. tasmād om ity udāhṛtya  
yajñadānatapaḥkriyāḥ  
pravartante vidhānoktāḥ  
satataṃ brahmavādinām
25. tad ity anabhisamdhāya  
phalam yajñatapahkriyāḥ  
dānakriyāś ca vividhāḥ  
kriyante mokṣakāṅkṣibhiḥ
26. sadbhāve sādhubhāve ca  
sad ity etat prayujyate  
praśaste karmaṇi tathā  
sacchabdaḥ pārtha yujyate

18. With a view to respect, honor, and reverence,  
And with sheer hypocrisy, what austerity  
Is performed, that is called in this world  
(Austerity) of passion; it is insecure and impermanent.
19. If with deluded notions,<sup>2</sup> or with self-  
Torture, austerity is performed,  
Or in order to destroy another,  
That is declared to be of darkness.
20. The gift which with the mere thought 'One must give!'  
Is given to one that does no (return) favor,  
At the proper place and time, to a worthy person,  
That gift is said to be of goodness.
21. But what in order to get a return favor,  
Or with a view to the fruit as well,  
Or when it hurts to give, is given,  
That gift is said to be of passion.
22. What gift at the wrong place and time  
And to unworthy persons is given,  
Without (suitable) marks of respect and with contempt,  
That is declared to be of darkness,
23. *Om*, *Tat*, *Sat*: thus the designation  
Of Brahman,<sup>3</sup> threefold, is recorded.  
Thereby brahmans, and Vedas,  
And acts of worship were fashioned of old.
24. Therefore after pronouncing *Om*  
Acts of worship, gift, and austerity  
Are undertaken as prescribed in (Vedic) injunctions  
Always on the part of students of Brahman.
25. With *Tat* ('That'), and without aiming  
At fruit, acts of worship and austerity  
And acts of giving of various sorts  
Are performed by men that seek release.
26. In the meaning of 'real' and in the meaning of 'good'  
The word *Sat* is employed;  
Likewise of a laudable action  
The word *Sat* is used, son of Pṛthā.

27. yajñe tapasi dāne ca  
sthitiḥ sad iti co 'cyate  
karma cai 'va tadarthīyaṃ  
sad ity evā 'bbidhīyate

28. śraddhayā hutam dattam  
tapas taptam kṛtam ca yat  
asad ity ucyate pārtha  
na ca tat pretya no iha

iti śraddhātraya vibhāgayogo nāma saptadaśo 'dhyāyaḥ

27. Also in the matter of worship, austerity, and giving,  
Steadfastness is called *Sat*;  
And action for such purposes as those  
Is likewise called *Sat* ('good').

28. Oblation offered or gift given without faith,  
Or austerity or action thus performed,  
Is called *Asat* (not *Sat*, not good), son of *Pṛthā*;  
It is naught hereafter and naught in this world.

Here ends the Seventeenth Chapter, called Discipline of Distinction of  
Three Kinds of Faith.

## XVIII

arjuna uvāca

1. saṁnyāsasya mahābāho  
tattvam icchāmi veditum  
tyāgasya ca hr̥ṣīkeśa  
pṛthak keśiniśūdana

śrībhagavān uvāca

2. kāmyānāṁ karmaṇāṁ nyāsaṁ  
saṁnyāsaṁ kavayo viduḥ  
sarvakarmaphalatyāgaṁ  
prāhus tyāgaṁ vicakṣaṇāḥ
3. tyājyaṁ doṣavad ity eke  
karma prāhur manīṣiṇāḥ  
yajñadānatapaḥkarma  
na tyājyaṁ iti cā 'pare
4. niścayaṁ śṛṇu me tatra  
tyāge bharatasattama  
tyāgo hi puruṣavyāghra  
trividhaḥ saṁprakīrtitaḥ
5. yajñadānatapaḥkarma  
na tyājyaṁ kāryaṁ eva tat  
yajño dānaṁ tapaś cai 'va  
pāvanāni manīṣiṇām
6. etāny api tu karmāṇi  
saṅgaṁ tyaktvā phalāni ca  
kartavyāni 'ti me pārtha  
niścitaṁ matam uttamam
7. niyatasya tu saṁnyāsaḥ  
karmaṇo no 'papadyate  
mohāt tasya parityāgas  
tāmasaḥ parikīrtitaḥ
8. duḥkham ity eva yat karma  
kāyakleśabhayāt tyajet  
sa kṛtvā rājasam tyāgaṁ  
nai 'va tyāgaphalaṁ labhet



## CHAPTER XVIII

Arjuna said:

1. Of renunciation, great-armed one,  
I desire to know the truth,  
And of abandonment, Hṛṣīkeśa,  
Severally, Slayer of Keśin.

The Blessed One said:

2. The renouncing of acts of desire  
Sages call renunciation.  
The abandonment of all action-fruits  
The wise call abandonment.
3. That it must be abandoned as sinful, some  
Wise men say of action;  
That actions of worship, gift, and austerity  
Must not be abandoned, say others.
4. Hear my decision in this matter  
Of abandonment, best of Bharatas;  
For abandonment, O man-tiger,  
Is reputed to be threefold.
5. Actions of worship, gift, and austerity  
Must not be abandoned, but rather performed;  
Worship, gift, and austerity  
Are purifiers of the wise.
6. However, these actions  
With abandonment of attachment and fruits  
Must be performed: this, son of Pṛthā, is My  
Definite and highest judgment.
7. But abandonment of a (religiously) required  
Action is not seemly;  
Abandonment thereof owing to delusion  
Is reputed to be of the nature of darkness.
8. Just because it is troublesome, what action  
One abandons thru fear of bodily affliction,  
Such a man performs an abandonment that is of the nature of passion;  
By no means shall he get any fruit of (this) abandonment.

9. kāryam ity eva yat karma  
niyatam kriyate 'rjuna  
saṅgam tyaktvā phalam cai 'va  
sa tyāgaḥ sāttviko mataḥ
10. na dveṣṭy akuśalam karma  
kuśale nā 'nuṣajjate  
tyāgī sattvasamāviṣṭo  
medhāvī chinnaśaṃsayah
11. na hi dehabhṛtā śakyam  
tyaktuṃ karmāṇy aśeṣataḥ  
yas tu karmaphalatyāgī  
sa tyāgī 'ty abhidhiyate
12. aniṣṭam iṣṭam miśram ca  
trividham karmanāḥ phalam  
bhavaty atyāginām pretya  
na tu saṃnyāsinām kvacit
13. pañcai 'tāni mahābāho  
kāraṇāni nibodha me  
sāṃkhye kṛtānte proktāni  
siddhaye sarvakarmaṇām
14. adhiṣṭhānam tathā kartā  
karaṇam ca pṛthagvidham  
vividhāś ca pṛthakceṣṭā  
daivam cai 'vā 'tra pañcamam
15. śarīravāṇmanobhir yat  
karma prārabhate narah  
nyāyām vā viparītam vā  
pañcai 'te tasya hetavaḥ
16. tatrai 'vam sati kartāram  
ātmānam kevalam tu yah  
paśyaty akṛtabuddhitvān  
na sa paśyati durmatih
17. yasya nā 'haṃkṛto bhāvo  
buddhir yasya na lipyate  
hatvā 'pi sa imāṃl lokān  
na hanti na nibadhyate

9. Simply because it ought to be done, when action  
That is (religiously) required is performed, Arjuna,  
Abandoning attachment and fruit,  
That abandonment is held to be of goodness.
10. He loathes not disagreeable action,  
Nor does he cling to agreeable (action),  
The man of abandonment who is filled with goodness,  
Wise, whose doubts are destroyed.
11. For a body-bearing (soul) can not  
Abandon actions without remainder;  
But he who abandons the fruit of action  
Is called the man of (true) abandonment.
12. Undesired, desired, and mixed —  
Threefold is the fruit of action  
That ensues after death for those who are not men of abandonment,  
But never for men of renunciation.
13. O great-armed one, these five  
Factors learn from Me,  
Which are declared in the reason-method<sup>1</sup> doctrine  
For the effective performance of all actions.
14. The (material) basis, the agent too,  
And the instruments of various sorts,  
And the various motions of several kinds,  
And just Fate as the fifth of them.<sup>2</sup>
15. With body, speech, or mind, whatever  
Action a man undertakes,  
Whether it be lawful or the reverse,  
These are its five factors.
16. This being so, as agent herein  
Whoso however the self alone  
Regards, because his intelligence is imperfect,  
He does not see (truly), the fool.
17. Whose state (of mind) is not egoized,  
Whose intelligence is not stained,  
He, even tho he slays these folk,  
Does not slay, and is not bound (by his actions).

18. jñānaṃ jñeyaṃ parijñātā  
trividhā karmacodanā  
karaṇaṃ karma karte 'ti  
trividhaḥ karmasaṃgrahaḥ
19. jñānaṃ karma ca kartā ca  
tridhai 'va guṇabhedataḥ  
procyate guṇasaṃkhyāne  
yathāvac chrṇu tāny api
20. sarvabhūteṣu yenai 'kaṃ  
bhāvam avyayam ikṣate  
avibhaktaṃ vibhakteṣu  
taj jñānaṃ viddhi sāttvikam
21. pṛthaktvena tu yaj jñānaṃ  
nānābhāvān pṛthagvidhān  
vetti sarveṣu bhūteṣu  
taj jñānaṃ viddhi rājasam
22. yat tu kṛtsnavad ekasmin  
kārye saktam ahetukam  
atattvārthavad alpaṃ ca  
tat tāmasam udāhṛtam
23. niyataṃ saṅgarahitam  
arāgadveṣataḥ kṛtam  
aphalaprepsunā karma  
yat tat sāttvikam ucyate
24. yat tu kāmepsunā karma  
sāhaṃkāreṇa vā punaḥ  
kriyate bahulāyāsaṃ  
tad rājasam udāhṛtam
25. anubandhaṃ kṣayaṃ himsām  
anapekṣya ca pauraṣam  
mohād ārabhyate karma  
yat tat tāmasam ucyate
26. muktasaṅgo 'nahaṃvādī  
dhṛtyutsāhasamanvitaḥ  
siddhyasiddhyor nirvikāraḥ  
kartā sāttvika ucyate

18. Knowledge, the object of knowledge, the knower,  
Form the threefold impellent cause of action;  
Instrument, action, and the agent,  
Form the threefold summary of action.<sup>3</sup>
19. Knowledge, and action, and the agent  
Are of just three kinds, according to difference of Strands;  
So it is declared in the theory of the Strands;<sup>4</sup>  
Hear of them also, how they are.
20. Whereby in all beings one  
Unchanging condition men perceive,  
Unmanifold in the manifold,  
Know that that knowledge is of goodness.
21. But what knowledge in various fashion  
Different conditions of various sorts  
Sees in all beings,  
Know that that knowledge is of passion:<sup>5</sup>
22. But what knowledge to one — as if it were all —  
Thing to be done is attached, unconcerned with causes,<sup>6</sup>  
Not dealing with the true nature of things, and insignificant,  
That is declared to be of darkness.
23. Obligatory, free from attachment,  
Done without desire or loathing,  
By one who seeks no fruit from it, action  
Such as this is called of goodness.
24. But action which by one seeking desires,  
Or again by one who is selfish,  
Is done, with much weary labor,  
That is declared to be of passion.
25. Consequences, loss, injury (to others),  
And (one's own) human power disregarding,  
Owing to delusion, when action is undertaken,  
It is declared to be of darkness.
26. Free from attachment, not talking of himself,  
Full of steadfastness and energy,  
Unchanged in success or failure,  
Such an agent is called one of goodness.

27. rāgī karmaphalaprepsur  
 lubdho hīmsātmako 'śuciḥ  
 harṣaśokānvitaḥ kartā  
 rājasah parikīrtitaḥ
28. ayuktaḥ prākṛtaḥ stabdhaḥ  
 śaṭho naikṛtiko 'lasaḥ  
 viśādi dīrghasūtrī ca  
 kartā tāmasa ucyate
29. buddher bhedaṁ dhṛteś cai 'va  
 guṇatas trividhaṁ śṛṇu  
 procyamānam aśeṣeṇa  
 pṛthaktvena dhanamjaya
30. pravṛttiṁ ca nivṛttiṁ ca  
 kāryākārye bhayābhave  
 bandhaṁ mokṣaṁ ca yā vetti  
 buddhiḥ sā pārtha sāttviki
31. yayā dharmam adharmaṁ ca  
 kāryaṁ cā 'kāryam eva ca  
 ayathāvat prajānāti  
 buddhiḥ sā pārtha rājasī
32. adharmaṁ dharmam iti yā  
 manyate tamasā 'vṛtā  
 sarvārthān viparītāṁś ca  
 buddhiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī
33. dhṛtyā yayā dhārayate  
 maṇaḥprāṇendriyakriyāḥ  
 yogenā 'vyabhicāriṇyā  
 dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha sāttviki
34. yayā tu dharmakāmārthān  
 dhṛtyā dhārayate 'rjuna  
 prasaṅgena phalākāṅkṣī  
 dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha rājasī
35. yayā svapnaṁ bhayaṁ śokaṁ  
 viśādaṁ madam eva ca  
 na vimuñcati durmedhā  
 dhṛtiḥ sā pārtha tāmasī

27. Passionate, seeking the fruits of action,  
Greedy, injurious, impure,  
Full of joy and grief, such an agent  
Is celebrated as one of passion.
28. Undisciplined, vulgar, arrogant,  
Tricky, dishonest, lazy,  
Despondent, and procrastinating,  
Such an agent is said to be of darkness.
29. The distinction of intelligence and of firmness, also,  
Threelfold according to the Strands, hear  
Fully expounded  
In their several forms, Dhananjaya.
30. Activity and cessation from it,  
Things to be done and not to be done, danger and security,  
Bondage and release, that which knows these  
Is the intelligence that is of goodness, son of Pṛthā.
31. Whereby right and unright,  
And things to be done and not to be done,  
Are understood incorrectly,  
That intelligence, son of Pṛthā, is of passion.
32. Right as unright what  
Conceives, obscured by darkness,  
And all things contrary (to the truth),  
That intelligence, son of Pṛthā, is of darkness.
33. The firmness with which one holds fast  
The activities of the mind, life-breaths, and senses,  
And which is unswerving in discipline,  
That firmness is of goodness, son of Pṛthā.
34. But when to religion, love, and wealth  
With firmness he holds fast, Arjuna,  
With attachment, desirous of the fruits,  
That firmness is of passion, son of Pṛthā.
35. Whereby sleep, fear, sorrow,  
Despondency, and pride,  
The foolish man does not let go,  
That firmness is of darkness, son of Pṛthā.

36. sukhaṃ tv idānīṃ trividhaṃ  
 śṛṇu me bharataṣabha  
 abhyāsād ramate yatra  
 duḥkhāntaṃ ca nigacchati
37. yat tad agre viṣam iva  
 pariṇāme 'mṛtopamam  
 tat sukhaṃ sāttvikaṃ proktaṃ  
 ātmabuddhiprasādaṃ
38. viṣayendriyaśaṃyogād  
 yat tad agre 'mṛtopamam  
 pariṇāme viṣam iva  
 tat sukhaṃ rājasam smṛtam
39. yad agre cā 'nubandhe ca  
 sukhaṃ mohanam ātmanaḥ  
 nidrālasyaḥ pramādotthaṃ  
 tat tāmasam udāhṛtam
40. na tad asti pṛthivyāṃ vā  
 divi deveṣu vā punaḥ  
 sattvaṃ prakṛtijair muktaṃ  
 yad ebhiḥ syāt tribhir guṇaiḥ
41. brāhmaṇakṣatriyaviśāṃ  
 sūdrāṇāṃ ca paramtapa  
 karmāṇi pravibhaktāni  
 svabhāvaprabhavair guṇaiḥ
42. śamo damaḥ tapaḥ śaucaṃ  
 kṣāntir ārjavam eva ca  
 jñānaṃ vijñānaṃ āstikyam  
 brahmakarma svabhāvajaṃ
43. śauryaṃ tejo dhṛtir dākṣyaṃ  
 yuddhe cā 'py apalāyanam  
 dānam īśvarabhāvaś ca  
 kṣātraṃ karma svabhāvajaṃ
44. kṛṣigaurakṣyavāṇijyaṃ  
 vaiśyakarma svabhāvajaṃ  
 paricaryātmakaṃ karma  
 sūdrasyā 'pi svabhāvajaṃ



36. But now the threefold happiness  
 Hear from Me, bull of Bharatas.  
 That in which he comes to delight thru long practice (only),  
 And comes to the end of suffering,
37. Which in the beginning is like poison,  
 But in maturity like nectar,  
 That is called the happiness of goodness,  
 Sprung from serenity of soul and of intellect.<sup>6</sup>
38. (Springing) from union of the senses and their objects,  
 That which in the beginning is like nectar,  
 In maturity like poison,  
 That happiness is recorded as of passion.
39. Which both in the beginning and in its consequence  
 Is a happiness that deludes the self,  
 Arising from sleep, sloth, and heedlessness,  
 That is declared to be of darkness.
40. There is no thing, whether on earth,  
 Or yet in heaven, among the gods,  
 No being which free from the material-nature-born  
 Strands, these three, might be.
41. Of brahmans, warriors, and artisans,  
 And of serfs, scorcher of the foe,  
 The actions are distinguished  
 According to the Strands that spring from their innate nature.
42. Calm, (self-)control, austerities, purity,  
 Patience, and uprightness,  
 Theoretical and practical knowledge, and religious faith,  
 Are the natural-born actions of brahmans.
43. Heroism, majesty, firmness, skill,  
 And not fleeing in battle also,  
 Generosity, and lordly nature,  
 Are the natural-born actions of warriors.
44. Agriculture, cattle-tending, and commerce  
 Are the natural-born actions of artisans;  
 Action that consists of service  
 Is likewise natural-born to a serf.

45. sve-sve karmaṇy abhirataḥ  
samsiddhiṃ labhate naraḥ  
svakarmanirataḥ siddhiṃ  
yathā vindati tac chr̥ṇu
46. yataḥ pravṛttir bhūtānāṃ  
yena sarvam idaṃ tatam  
svakarmanā tam abhyarcya  
siddhiṃ vindati mānavah
47. śreyān svadharma viguṇaḥ  
paradharmāt svanuṣṭhitāt  
svabhāvaniyataṃ karma  
kurvan nā 'pnoti kilbiṣam
48. saha jaṃ karma kaunteya  
sadoṣam api na tyajet  
sarvārambhā hi doṣeṇa  
dhūmenā 'gnir ivā 'vṛtāḥ
49. asaktabuddhiḥ sarvatra  
jitātmā vigataspr̥haḥ  
naiṣkarmyasiddhiṃ paramāṃ  
saṃnyāsenā 'dhigacchati
50. siddhiṃ prāpto yathā brahma  
tathā 'pnoti nibodha me  
samāsenai 'va kaunteya  
niṣṭhā jñānasya yā parā
51. buddhyā viśuddhayā yukto  
dhr̥tyā 'tmānaṃ niyamya ca  
śabdādīn viśayāṃs tyaktvā  
rāgadveṣau vyudasya ca
52. viviktasevī laghvāśī  
yatavākkāyamānasaḥ  
dhyānayogaparo nityaṃ  
vairāgyaṃ samupāśritaḥ
53. ahaṃkāraṃ balaṃ darpaṃ  
kāmaṃ krodhaṃ parigrahaṃ  
vimucya nirmamaḥ śānto  
brahmabhūyāya kalpate

45. Taking delight in his own special kind of action,  
A man attains perfection;  
Delighting in one's own special action, success  
How one reaches, that hear!
46. Whence comes the activity<sup>1</sup> of beings,  
By whom this all is pervaded, —  
Him worshiping by (doing) one's own appropriate action,  
A man attains perfection.
47. Better one's own duty, (even) imperfect,  
Than another's duty well performed.  
Action pertaining to his own estate  
Performing, he incurs no guilt.
48. Natural-born action, son of Kuntī,  
Even tho it be faulty, one should not abandon.  
For all undertakings by faults  
Are dimmed, as fire by smoke.
49. His mentality unattached to any object,  
Self-conquered, free from longings,  
To the supreme perfection of actionlessness  
He comes thru renunciation.
50. Having attained perfection, how to Brahman  
He also attains, hear from Me,  
In only brief compass, son of Kuntī;  
Which is the highest culmination of knowledge.
51. With purified mentality disciplined,  
And restraining himself with firmness,  
Abandoning the objects of sense, sounds and the rest,  
And putting away desire and loathing,
52. Cultivating solitude, eating lightly,  
Restraining speech, body, and mind,  
Devoted to the discipline of meditation constantly,  
Taking refuge in dispassion,
53. From egotism, force, pride,  
Desire, wrath, and possession  
Freed, unselfish, calmed,  
He is fit for becoming Brahman.

54. brahmabhūtaḥ prasannātmā  
na śocati na kāṅkṣati  
samaḥ sarveṣu bhūteṣu  
madbhaktiṃ labhate parām
55. bhaktyā mām abhijānāti  
yāvān yaś cā 'smi tattvataḥ  
tato mām tattvato jñātvā  
viśate tadanantaram
56. sarvakarmāṇy api sadā  
kurvāṇo madvyapāśrayaḥ  
matprasādād avāpnoti  
śāśvataṃ padam avyayam
57. cetasā sarvakarmāṇi  
mayi samnyasya matparaḥ  
buddhiyogam upāśritya  
maccittaḥ satataṃ bhava
58. maccittaḥ sarvadurgāṇi  
matprasādāt tarīṣyasi  
atha cet tvam ahaṃkāraṇ  
na śroṣyasi vinaṅkṣyasi
59. yad ahaṃkāram āśritya  
na yotsya iti manyase  
mithyai 'śa vyavasāyas te  
prakṛtis tvām niyokṣyati
60. svabhāvajena kaunteya  
nibaddhaḥ svena karmaṇā  
kartuṃ ne 'cchasi yan mohāt  
karīṣyasi avaśo 'pi tat
61. īśvaraḥ sarvabhūtānāṃ  
hrddeśe 'rjuna tiṣṭhati  
bhrāmayaṇ sarvabhūtāni  
yantrārūḍhāni māyayā
62. tam eva śaraṇaṃ gaccha  
sarvabhāvena bhārata  
tatprasādāt parām śāntiṃ  
sthānaṃ prāpsyasi śāśvataṃ

54. Having become Brahman, serene-souled,  
He neither grieves nor longs;  
Alike to all beings,  
He attains supreme devotion to Me.
55. Thru devotion he comes to know Me,  
What My measure is, and who I am, in very truth;  
Then, knowing Me in very truth,  
He enters into (Me) straightway.
56. Even tho all actions ever  
He performs, relying on Me,  
By My grace he reaches  
The eternal, undying station.
57. With thy thoughts all actions  
Casting upon Me,<sup>8</sup> devoted to Me,  
Turning to discipline of mentality,  
Keep thy mind ever fixed on Me.
58. If thy mind is on Me, all difficulties  
Shalt thou cross over by My grace;  
But if thru egotism thou  
Wilt not heed, thou shalt perish.
59. If clinging to egotism  
Thou thinkest 'I will not fight!,'  
Vain is this thy resolve;  
(Thine own) material nature will coerce thee.
60. Son of Kuntī, by thine own natural  
Action held fast,  
What thru delusion thou seekest not to do,  
That thou shalt do even against thy will.
61. Of all beings, the Lord  
In the heart abides, Arjuna,  
Causing all beings to turn around  
(As if) fixed in a machine,<sup>9</sup> by his magic power.
62. To Him alone go for refuge  
With thy whole being, son of Bharata;  
By His grace, supreme peace  
And the eternal station shalt thou attain.

63. iti te jñānam ākhyātam  
 guhyād guhyataram mayā  
 vimṛśyai 'tad aśeṣeṇa  
 yathe 'cchasi tathā kuru
64. sarvaguhyatamam bhūyaḥ  
 śṛṇu me paramam vacaḥ  
 iṣṭo 'si me dṛḍham iti  
 tato vakṣyāmi te hitam
65. manmanā bhava madbhakto  
 madyājī māṃ namaskuru  
 mām evai 'śyasi satyaṃ te  
 pratijāne priyo 'si me
66. sarvadharmān parityajya  
 mām ekaṃ śaraṇaṃ vraja  
 ahaṃ tvā sarvapāpebhyo  
 mokṣayiṣyāmi mā śucaḥ
67. idaṃ te nā 'tapaskāya  
 nā 'bhaktāya kadācana  
 na cā 'śuśrūṣave vācyaṃ  
 na ca mām yo 'bhyasūyati
68. ya idaṃ paramaṃ guhyaṃ  
 madbhakteṣv abhidhāsyati  
 bhaktiṃ mayi parāṃ kṛtvā  
 mām evai 'śyaty asaṃśayaḥ
69. na ca tasmān manuṣyeṣu  
 kaścin me priyakṛttamaḥ  
 bhavitā na ca me tasmād  
 anyaḥ priyataro bhuvi
70. adhyeṣyate ca ya imaṃ  
 dharmaṃ saṃvādam āvayoḥ  
 jñānayajñena tenā 'ham  
 iṣṭaḥ syām iti me matiḥ
71. śraddhāvān anasūyaś ca  
 śṛṇuyād āpi yo naraḥ  
 so 'pi muktaḥ śubhāṃl lokān  
 prāpnuyāt puṇyakarmaṇām

63. Thus to thee has been expounded the knowledge  
That is more secret than the secret, by Me;  
After pondering on it fully,  
Act as thou thinkest best.
64. Further, the highest secret of all,  
My supreme message, hear.  
Because thou art greatly loved of Me,  
Therefore I shall tell thee what is good for thee.
65. Be Me-minded, devoted to Me;  
Worshipping Me, revere Me;  
And to Me alone shalt thou go; truly to thee  
I promise it — (because) thou art dear to Me.
66. Abandoning all (other) duties,  
Go to Me as thy sole refuge;  
From all evils I thee  
Shall rescue: be not grieved!
67. This on thy part to no one not endowed with austerity,  
Nor ever to one not devoted,  
Nor to one not obedient, must be told,  
Nor to one who murmurs against Me.
68. Whoso this supreme secret  
Shall make known to My devotees,  
Showing utmost devotion to Me,  
Shall go just to Me, without a doubt.
69. And not than he among men  
Is there any who does things more pleasing to Me;  
Nor shall there be than he to Me  
Any other dearer on earth.
70. And whoso shall study this  
Colloquy on duty between us two,  
By him with knowledge-worship I  
Would be worshiped: so I hold.
71. With faith, and not murmuring against it,  
What man even hears it,  
He too shall be released, and the fair worlds  
Of men of virtuous deeds shall he attain.

72. kaccid etac chrutaṃ pārtha  
tvayai 'kāgreṇa cetasā  
kaccid ajñānasaṃmohaḥ  
praṇaṣṭas te dhanamjaya

arjuna uvāca

73. naṣṭo mohaḥ smṛtir labdhā  
tvatprasādān mayā 'cyuta  
sthito 'smi gatasamdehaḥ  
kariṣye vacanam tava

saṃjaya uvāca

74. ity ahaṃ vāsudevasya  
pārthasya ca mahātmanaḥ  
saṃvādam imam aśrauṣam  
adbhutaṃ romaharṣaṇam

75. vyāsaprasādāc chrutavān  
etad guhyam ahaṃ param  
yogaṃ yogeśvarāt kṛṣṇāt  
sākṣāt kathayataḥ svayam

76. rājan saṃsmṛtya-saṃsmṛtya  
saṃvādam imam adbhutam  
keśavārjunayoḥ puṇyam  
hr̥ṣyāmi ca muhur-muhuh

77. tac ca saṃsmṛtya-saṃsmṛtya  
rūpam atyadbhutaṃ hareḥ  
vismayo me mahān rājan  
hr̥ṣyāmi ca punaḥ-punaḥ

78. yatra yogeśvaraḥ kṛṣṇo  
yatra pārtho dhanurdharaḥ  
tatra śrīr vijayo bhūtir  
dhruvā nītir matir mama

iti mokṣasaṃnyāsayogo nāmā 'ṣṭādaśo 'dhyāyaḥ  
iti śrīmadbhagavadgītā upaniṣadaḥ samāptāḥ



72. Has this been heard, son of Pṛthā,  
 By thee with concentrated thought?  
 Has the confusion of ignorance  
 In thee been destroyed, Dhanamjaya?

Arjuna said:

73. Destroyed the confusion; attention (to the truth) is won,  
 By Thy grace, on my part, O Changeless One;  
 I stand firm, with doubts dispersed;  
 I shall do Thy word.

Samjaya said:

74. Thus I of Vāsudeva  
 And the exalted son of Pṛthā  
 This colloquy have heard,  
 Marvelous and thrilling.
75. By the grace of Vyāsa have I heard  
 This supreme secret,  
 This discipline, from Kṛṣṇa the Lord of Discipline,  
 Speaking it Himself in very person.
76. O king, as I recall again and again  
 This marvelous colloquy,  
 And holy, of Keśava and Arjuna,  
 I thrill with joy at every moment.
77. And as I recall again and again that  
 Most wondrous form of Hari,  
 Great is my amazement, O king,  
 And I thrill with joy again and again.
78. Where is Kṛṣṇa the Lord of Discipline,  
 And where is the Bowman, the son of Pṛthā,  
 There fortune, victory, prosperity,  
 And statecraft are firmly fixed, I ween.

Here ends the Eighteenth Chapter, called Discipline of Renunciation  
 unto Salvation.

THE END OF THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ.

## NOTES TO THE TRANSLATION

Ś denotes the Sanskrit commentary of Śaṅkara; R, that of Rāmānuja.

### Notes on Chapter I

1. (Verse 10) Bhīṣma was the commander of the Kuru army. Bhīma, the third of the sons of Pāṇḍu, was not the actual leader of their army; he is here opposed to Bhīṣma for the sake of the word-play on the two names.

2. (Colophon) The titles given to each of the eighteen chapters in the final colophons are late additions, not parts of the original text. Many of them vary in the MSS. and printed texts, but it is hardly worth while to record these variations.

### Notes on Chapter II

1. (Vs 5) I.e., without waiting for such a punishment in a future life. Interference with a guru's desires is a heinous sin. This verse has caused much unnecessary discussion; see JAOS. 52. 71 f.

2. (Vs 11) The meaning is that Arjuna shows ignorant presumption in daring to discuss learned topics while showing himself so uninformed as to mourn the dead. So essentially R. See JAOS. 52. 70 f.; and cf. *prājñavādikaḥ*, "talking as (pretending to be) wise," Mbh. ii. 2288 (Critical edition ii. 61. 38).

3. (Vs 14) So Garbe and Deussen; cf. Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 4. 3. 10. Ś, 'senses,' or (alternatively) 'objects of sense'; R the latter; both supported only by fantastic etymologies. Hill follows the second, Telang and Barnett the first, of Ś's guesses.

4. (Vs 15) So Ś, Telang, Garbe, Deussen, Barnett; or, 'steadfast' (R, Senart, Hill).

5. (Vs 20) So, essentially, R, Telang, Barnett. The second *na* is to be taken closely with *bhaviṭā* (together, 'will come not to be'), which compound expression is negated by the first *na*, as in vs 12 *na . . . nāsam*. Otherwise, but implausibly, Ś (who understands *abhaviṭā*), and other moderns. The objection commonly raised to R's interpretation is that the soul should not be spoken of as having 'come to be,' since it has existed from everlasting. But this is a slight and superficial inconsistency, really only verbal in character; much more serious ones are very common in the Gītā.

6. (Vs 39) Sāṃkhya; see Vol. 2, pp. 63 ff.

7. (Vs 42) Or, 'in talk about the Vedas'?

8. (Vs 43) So Ś, Telang, Garbe, Deussen, Barnett, Senart, Hill. A possible alternative would be 'rebirth and the fruit of actions.'

9. (Vs 45) *sattva*; both Ś and R, followed by Barnett, take it to mean the 'Strand' (*guṇa*) of that name. This may be right, tho seemingly inconsistent with the context. But *sattva* may also mean 'truth, reality' (so Deussen, Hill), 'purity,' or 'courage' (so Telang, Garbe).

10. (Vs 59) The fasting man, until he 'sees the highest,' cannot help feeling longing for food, i.e. for 'flavor,' the object of the sense of taste, tho he feels no longing for the objects of the other senses. After a sufficiently long fast (interpreted as a sign that he 'sees the highest'), a man ceases even to feel hungry. Hindu commentators and modern interpreters have a different interpretation, abandoning the simple and familiar meaning of the word *rasa* (which can hardly mean anything but 'flavor' in the above sense, coming immediately after *viṣayāḥ* and clearly meant as one of the 'objects of sense'), for a more forced one.

11. (Vs 66) Here, 'effective religious impulse'; the word *bhāvanā* means 'bringing to be, tendency to produce something (here, religious effort).' It is a technical word of the Mīmāṃsā system; see Edgerton, *The Mīmāṃsā Nyāya Prakāśa*, Glossarial Index s.v., and p. 5 ff.

12. (Vs 70) Or, 'stability.'

13. (Vs 72) I.e., fixation in or of Brahman, or resulting in the attainment of Brahman. Ś, *brahmaṇi bhavā*; R, *brahma-prāpikā*.

14. (Vs. 72) I.e., *nirvāṇa* in, or that is, Brahman; R, *nirvāṇamayam brahma*.

### Notes on Chapter III

1. (Vs 2) R reads *eva* for *iva*, 'that are quite confused.' Cf. JAOS. 52. 73.

2. (Vs 3) Sāṃkhya; see ii. 39 and note.

3. (Vs 15) In xiv. 3, 4 Brahman clearly equals Prakṛti (cf. my Vol. 2, p. 52); and here also, in the first two occurrences at least, it is probably felt vaguely in some such way (cf. the notes of Garbe and Hill). But the whole progression of terms in vss 14, 15 cannot be forced into a really logical sequence; however the words be interpreted, the conclusion does not follow from the premises. 'Worship' is not the starting-point of the series but an intermediate term.

4. (Vs 16) *aghāyur*, taken by Ś, R, and some moderns as a compound of *agha* and *āyus*, 'of evil life.' It seems to occur only here in classical Sanskrit; but it is probably to be understood as the Vedic *aghāyu*, not a compound but from a denominative verb stem based on *agha*.

5. (Vs 30) See note on v. 10, below.

6. (Vs 38) So R, Barnett, Deussen, Senart, Hill (also Schlegel and Boehtlingk); according to Ś, Telang, Garbe, 'this [knowledge].'

7. (Vs 41) *Jñāna* and *viññāna*; see Edgerton in *Festschrift M. Winternitz* (Leipzig, 1933), pp. 217-220.

## Notes on Chapter IV

1. (Vs 25) Ritualists.
2. (Vs 25) Philosophical mystics; the following is a cryptically figurative way of saying that they abandon ritual action and devote their thoughts to the Brahman alone.
3. (Vs 26) Ascetics who seek to annihilate all the senses.
4. (Vs 26) Men of 'discipline' or disinterested activity, who allow the senses to act on the objects of sense but without attachment to the latter.
5. (Vs 27) Followers of the 'Sāṃkhya' way of knowledge with complete renunciation of action.
6. (Vs 29) Those who pursue the method of breath-exercises, as in the (later) Yoga.
7. (Vs 30) Those who (like many Jains) seek salvation by suicide, thru slow starvation.
8. (Vs 32) Or, 'performed, carried out.'
9. (Vs 32) Or, 'mouth'; so Garbe and Senart, who understand 'are offered to Brahman'; it may, however, mean only 'are performed before Brahman.' This, to be sure, perhaps comes to the same thing, but is less definite, and perhaps purposely so. Some moderns follow Ś in understanding the Veda as meant, which to me is most implausible. Another possibility is that *brahmaṇo mukhe* means 'in the fire (of sacrifice),' as that by which the gods eat the offerings.

## Notes on Chapter V

1. (Vs 4) See ii. 39 and note.
2. (Vs 10) *ādhāya* here must mean the same as *saṃnyasya* iii. 30, xii. 6, and xviii. 57. Ś and some moderns understand 'doing all as acts of devotion to Brahman' (or 'to Me,' iii. 30 and xviii. 57). Others, essentially with R, 'realizing that it is Brahman (or God) that does all acts and that the individual is not the doer.' If the latter is right, as I think likely tho not certain, it is not necessary to take Brahman here as equal to Prakṛti, with R and Hill (tho this is in itself quite possible, cf. note on iii. 15). Since Brahman or God is all, all acts must really be done by Him; and this despite the fact that elsewhere we are told often and clearly enough that all actions are done by Prakṛti. Cf. Vol. 2, p. 45 f.
3. (Vs 10) The same figure in Buddhistic Sanskrit, *Doṣabhūmika Sūtra V, gūḥā* 29 (ed. Rahder and Susa, 1931). It is a very effective image to one who has seen lotus-covered Indian ponds. Drops of water stand away from the leaves as if from an oiled surface.
4. (Vs 27) I.e., as the breath collectively passes. Tho *prāṇa* properly means the breath above the diaphragm and *apāna* the breath below it, they are frequently used together to denote the vital breath as a whole; and even more com-

monly *prāṇa* alone is so used. The common renderings 'expiration' and 'inspiration,' for *prāṇa* and *apāna*, or vice versa, are groundless; significantly, those who hold to them have never been able to agree as to which was which. See G. W. Brown, *JAOS.* 39. 104-112.

5. (Vs 28) R, *sādhyadaśāyām iva sādhanadaśāyām aṇi*.

### Notes on Chapter VI

1. (Vs 8) See note on iii. 41.

2. (Vs 8) Ś here *aprakampya*. The precise interpretation of *kūṭastha* is not entirely clear, and the commentators had no consistent and reliable tradition (cf. note on xii. 3). In Pāli we find the same word as *kūṭastha*, and certainly it means something like 'not subject to change'; perhaps literally 'abiding on a mountain-top,' as if 'above the battle,' not subject to external influences. So apparently Barnett ('set on high').

3. (Vs 13) That is, 'straight, stiff.'

4. (Vs 26) So Ś, R; most moderns, 'to whatever object,' despite the ablative form (which might perhaps be due to attraction to the correlative *tatas tato*). Yet the grammatically stricter interpretation of Ś, R seems possible, at least.

5. (Vs 28) This is generally taken as an epithet of 'bliss': 'to endless bliss which involves contact with Brahman.' This is possible, but not necessary.

6. (Vs 29) So Garbe and Deussen with both Ś and R, *svātman* or *svam ātmānam*. Surely not 'Self' abstractly (Barnett, Hill) or 'I' ātman' (Senart).

7. (Vs 32) I.e., who sees that pleasure and pain to others are the same as to himself.

8. (Vs 33) *sāmya*, 'sameness,' 'non-difference,' and also 'indifference,' 'treating as alike.'

9. (Vs 39) Reading *etan*; R, *etam*, 'this my doubt.'

### Notes on Chapter VII

1. (Vs 2) See note on iii. 41.

2. (Vs 6) Both Ś and R, followed by Telang, Garbe, Deussen, Barnett, and Hill, take this to refer to both the 'natures' of vss 4 and 5. This is verbally possible, and certainly better than Senart's interpretation, which refers it to the 'lower' nature alone. If to either, the pronoun must refer rather to the last mentioned ('higher') nature; so I understand it. This may be philosophically less reasonable; but the *Gītā* is not a metaphysical treatise. As the following verses show, the author is thinking primarily of God's supreme essence.

3. (Vs 16) Or, 'wealth,' with Ś, Telang, Garbe, Deussen, Barnett, Senart, Hill. But R *aśvarya*. With this verse cf. Mbh. 12. 342. 33 ff., which also mentions

four classes of devotees (*bhakta*), the highest of which consists of those who are exclusive worshipers (*ekāntināḥ . . . ananyadevatāḥ*). The other three are unfortunately not named, but are all stigmatized as *phalakāma*.

4. (Vs 22) Construe with R and Garbe (see the latter's note).

5. (Vs 24) 'Fools' take the external manifestation of Kṛṣṇa to be all there is to Kṛṣṇa. Whether they think him a man or a 'god,' they are equally in error; the author does not distinguish between these two possible errors.

6. (Vs 29) On the terms used in this and the next verse see vss 3 and 4 in the next chapter, with notes.

### Notes on Chapter VIII

1. (Vs 3) Here the individual soul as distinguished from the universal soul and from matter.

2. (Vs 3) 'Karma,' man's own action, which causes him to be reborn in this or that condition in future births.

3. (Vs 4) Virtually *prakṛti*, 'material nature.'

4. (Vs 4) *Puruṣa* can only be a practical synonym of *ātman*. All the terms used here are somewhat loose and vague; the language is grandiloquent.

5. (Vs 4) Viṣṇu is identified with *yajña*, 'sacrifice, worship,' in a standard way in the Brāhmaṇas. See Garbe's note.

6. (Vs 21) Or, 'light'; R mentions this as an alternative.

7. (Vs 23) On this and the following verses, in which an Upaniṣad notion (BṛhU. 6. 2. 15 f., ChU. 5. 10. 1 ff.) is misinterpreted or reinterpreted by the Gītā, see Edgerton, 'The Hour of Death,' *Annals Bhandarkar Institute*, 8. 219-249, especially 245 ff.

### Notes on Chapter IX

1. (Vs 1) See note on iii. 41.

2. (Vs 26) Or perhaps, 'from him that has given himself.'

3. (Vs 28) So, as a unitary concept, Ś and R. This is quite possible, and in my opinion probable, in spite of v. 1 ff., which distinguish *saṁnyāsa* and *yoga* (for which reason most moderns understand here 'in renunciation and [or] discipline [of action]'). 'Renunciation' is also a *yoga*, 'discipline,' in a more general sense; cf. iii. 3. The *yoga* of v. 1 is short for the specific *karmayoga* of iii. 3 etc., which is used in the following verse v. 2.

### Notes on Chapter X

1. (Vs 6) With Garbe I take this to imply that the human race is founded by a Manu at the beginning of each of the four world-ages (*yuga*). The theory of 7, or 14, Manus is rather late and cannot be proved to have existed as early as the Gītā; but even if it did, the thought of the four world-ages easily suggests four Manus also. Rigid consistency is not to be expected here.

2. (Vs 6) So rightly Senart; *bhāva*, 'coming to be, origination,' as in ii. 16.

3. (Vs 7) *vibhūti*: R, *vibhūtir aīsvaryam . . . madhyattotpattisthitiḥ pravṛttirūpam vibhūtim*. Ś, *vistāram*; Ānandagiri on Ś here, *vividhā bhūtir bhavanam vaibhavam sarvātmakatvam*. Both meanings, 'lordship, power' (cf. Kathāsaritsāgara 17. 138, *prabhāṇam hi vibhūtyandhā . . . matiḥ*, 'the mind of lords, blinded by power' or 'greatness'), and 'varied manifestation,' are contained in the word. I have tried to suggest both by the term 'supernal manifestation.' Deussen, *Machtenfaltung*, which is very apt. The word occurs repeatedly in this chapter (vss 7, 16, 18, 19, 40, 41) and is chosen as the title of the chapter in the colophon. Cf. also *vibhu*, vs 12, which may contain the same two meanings.

4. (Vs 8) So R.

5. (Vs 12) Or, 'light'; so Ś, R.

6. (Vs 12) Or, 'unborn and supernally-manifested' (*vibhu*, related to *vibhūti*, see note on vs 7); so Ś and most moderns; R ignores the word. The commonest meaning of *vibhu*, however, is simply 'lord'; for this reason I have so rendered it.

7. (Vs 13) Probably Asita Devala is one person, rather than two; the epic knows such a personage.

8. (Vs 19) Or, 'divine, supernatural.' For this line R reads *vibhūtir ālmanah subhāḥ*. 'my fair supernal-manifestations.'

9. (Vs 29) *saṃyamant*, with etymological word-play on Yama (which is originally not connected with this root, but came to be felt as connected).

10. (Vs 30) Ś 'reckoners.' The root *kal-* is used with intent to play on Kāla, 'time.' The correct interpretation is given by P. E. Dumont in his note on *Īśvaragītā* 7. 16 (see his edition of that work, Baltimore, 1933), where this line is repeated.

11. (Vs 30) Ś 'lion or tiger'; R ignores the word; Veṅkaṭanātha, a subcommentator on R, says 'lion.'

12. (Vs 32) *pravadatām* can only be personal, and is therefore not partitive genitive but possessive (like the genitives of vs 36). R and (alternatively) Ś, followed by many moderns, would make it refer to various kinds of argument (as a partitive genitive), which seems to me a grammatical impossibility.

13. (Vs 34) All these words are grammatically feminine in Sanskrit.

14. (Vs 36) *sattva* has many meanings, among them 'courage.' But *sattvavat* is regularly used only in the sense of 'courageous.' This interpretation accords with the rest of the verse, which clearly deals with warlike and royal matters, which to the Hindus are identical (the warrior caste, *kṣatriya*, is the same as the royal caste, *rājanya*). Even gambling belongs specifically to this social group. I think that R meant 'courage' by his gloss, *mahāmanastvam*; and Ś may well have had the same idea (all he says is *sattvavatām sātvikānām*). The subcommentaries of Veṅkaṭanātha and Ānandagiri, wrongly as I think, understand 'goodness of the good'; and so most moderns.

15. (Vs 41) Or, 'lordliness, power'; see note on vs 7.

## Notes on Chapter XI

1. (Vs 18) So Ś, R, and most moderns. Less likely, 'treasure-store.'
2. (Vs 19) Or, 'mouth.'
3. (Vs 21) So, literally, Ś, Telang, Deussen, Senart; R, followed by Garbe, Barnett, Hill, 'draw near unto Thee.' But cf. vs 27.
4. (Vs 26) The word 'enter' is in the author's mind; when, in the next verse, he comes to use it, he makes the goal more specific: 'thy mouths.'
5. (Vs 29) Or, 'people'; so most commentators and interpreters, here and in vss 30, 32.
6. (Vs 37) So most moderns; Ś and R, followed by Barnett, take *brahmanya* as genitive with *ādikartre*, 'first creator even of Brahman (masculine).'
7. (Vs 38) Less likely, 'treasure-store.'
8. (Vs 40) *anantavīrya* seems to me better taken with R as a separate vocative; most interpreters follow Ś in taking it as a part of the following compound.
9. (Vs 41) R reads *tavemam*, evidently a *lectio facilior* to make the pronoun agree with *mahimānam*.

## Notes on Chapter XII

1. (Vs 3) *kūṣastha*; see note on vi. 8. Here Ś (departing from his previous explanation) understands 'abiding in trickery,' i.e. in *māyā*, the world-illusion of which God is the 'overseer.' This is worth quoting as an instance of the absurdity and inconsistency of which even the greatest commentators are sometimes guilty. He adds, to be sure, an alternative interpretation, which is substantially that adopted here.
2. (Vs 4) Either 'to all experiences,' indifferent to the results, as in ii. 48 etc. (so Ś, Deussen, Senart), or 'to all beings,' as in vi. 9 etc. (so, essentially, R and Garbe); or — very likely — both may be more or less implied.
3. (Vs 6) See note on v. 10.
4. (Vs 20) Cf. x. 18. According to Ś, followed by Telang, Garbe, Barnett, Hill, '(means of attaining) immortality.'

## Notes on Chapter XIII

1. (Vs 4) So Ś, R. It is implausible to suppose with Garbe that the Upaniṣads would be called *chandas*.
2. (Vs 4) So Ś, who quotes from BṛhU. 1. 4. 7 as an example. R refers the word to Bādarāyaṇa's Vedānta Sūtras, and is followed by Garbe, Barnett, and others. I consider it very improbable that this work existed in the time of the Gītā. And if *chandas* means the Vedic hymns, the Upaniṣads would not otherwise be mentioned in this verse. See JAOS. 52. 74.



3. (Vs 6) I.e., of senses with sense-objects? See Hill's note, which I endorse. The usual rendering is something like 'aggregation (of corporeal elements),' which is out of place here in a list of qualities, not physical elements. R has a different but very forced interpretation.

4. (Vs 11) Viz. salvation (Ś).

5. (Vs 12) So R (*anādi matparam*); Ś divides *anādimat param*, 'the beginningless supreme Brahman,' and modern translators generally follow him. The introduction of 'Me' as the basis of the impersonal Brahman naturally offends those who seek systematic consistency in the *Gitā*; but xiv. 27 proves that *matparam* is quite possible. Yet the rival interpretation is also possible.

6. (Vs 13) Or, 'mouths.'

7. (Vs 13) Or perhaps, 'ears'; so Telang, Garbe, Senart; but Ś, R, Deussen, Barnett, Hill, 'faculty of hearing,' which is more in accord with general usage.

8. (Vs 14) So Ś, Barnett, Hill; otherwise R, Telang, Garbe, Deussen, Senart.

9. (Vs 17) According to Ś, R, and most moderns this means that it is the illuminating power of all lights (sun, etc.). This is possible, but *jyotiṣām* may also, and in my opinion more probably, be partitive; cf. Chapter x, *passim*. 'Among lights it is that light which is beyond darkness.'

10. (Vs 17) So Ś, Telang, Garbe, Deussen, Barnett. 'The goal of knowledge' (salvation) is distinguished from the 'object of knowledge' (here, the thing known).

11. (Vs 17) The v. l. *viṣṭhitam*, 'fixed variously,' is read for *dhiṣṭhitam* by both Ś and R; nevertheless it is probably a *lectio facillior* (as such it is a common substitute for *dhiṣṭhita*- in the epic).

12. (Vs 18) So Ś; R, 'is fitted for.'

13. (Vs 20) Ś, R explain *kārya* as 'elemental body,' which is an 'effect' in the later Sāṃkhya sense, and *kāraṇa* (R *kāraṇa*) as the senses with *manas* (and *ahaṅkāra* and *buddhi*, Ś), which are 'causes' or 'factors' (productive elements) in that same sense. These both are construed as depending on *kartṛtve*, 'in the production of effects and causes,' i.e. of gross body and senses. Approximately so most moderns (Telang, Garbe, Senart, Hill, and apparently Barnett). I find this very forced and artificial. The only natural interpretation is to take *kārya-kāraṇa-kartṛ* as a three-member dvandva, made into an abstract by adding the suffix *-tva*. The three nouns derived from the root *kṛ*, 'act,' are meant to include all phases of action (cf. xviii. 18 for a very close parallel, where *karman* replaces *kārya*): *kārya*, 'thing to be done'; *kāraṇa*, 'means of doing it'; *kartṛ*, 'doer, agent'; the addition of *-tva* makes the whole compound mean approximately 'effectuation, instrumentality, and agency.' *Prakṛti* alone is at the bottom of all that concerns all of these, that is all phases of action. So in xviii. 18 *kāraṇa*, *karman*, and *kartṛ* constitute the threefold 'complete summary' of action. Deussen comes very close to this, but wrongly takes *-tva* only with *kartṛ*.

14. (Vs 23) Telang and Garbe understand this to mean 'whatever his moral conduct may be'; which introduces an idea not suggested in the Sanskrit. Rather, with R, whatever stage of transmigration he may be in.

15. (Vs 24) *Sāṃkhya*; see ii. 39, note.

16. (Vs 25) So Deussen; *śruti* usually suggests this; possibly, however, it may mean only 'to what they hear'; so most interpreters.

17. (Vs 28) Since the same Lord (= soul, cf. v. 15) is in all beings, the self of others is one's own self, and if he injures others, he injures himself. That this is the meaning seems obvious to me; but for some reason, it has escaped all commentators and modern interpreters examined by me except Deussen (and possibly Barnett, whose rendering is obscure to me).

18. (Vs 31) *Ś tatphalena*; R *na badhyate*.

#### Notes on Chapter XIV

1. (Vs 20) So Hill; and R *dehākārapariṇataprakṛtisamudbhavān*. S, followed by Telang, Garbe, Deussen, Barnett, Senart, 'from which the body arises.'

2. (Vs 22) As both Ś and R point out, these are the essential characteristics of the three 'Strands' of nature, 'goodness, passion, and darkness' respectively.

3. (Vs 24) So Ś, R, and most moderns; but it may equally well mean 'steadfast' (so Deussen, Senart).

#### Notes on Chapter XV

1. (Vs 1) Not (as has often been wrongly suggested) the banyan, which drops runners from its branches to form new roots. As Hill points out, this is not true of the peepal. Hill ingeniously tries to show that the metaphor nevertheless fits the peepal. I think it is unnecessary to do this; the author may well have meant his statement as a deliberate paradox, not intending to suggest that the actual tree has 'roots aloft and branches below.' The choice of the peepal, rather than any other tree, to symbolize material existence, was then dictated not by its specific nature, but by the fact that it is a well known and venerated tree. That the author himself erroneously confused the banyan and the peepal trees, as suggested by Deussen, seems absurd; both trees are too familiar in Indian life. The figure is taken from *Kaṭha Up.* 6. 1, where in the next verse it is described as 'a great terror, an uplifted thunderbolt' (appropriate terms for the *saṃsāra*). That it means also the 'soul' (v. Schroeder, *Festschrift E. Kuhn*, 59 ff.) seems grotesquely impossible.

2. (Vs 6) Or, 'light' (so R).

3. (Vs 8) *Īvara*, here 'individual soul.' Not 'lord of the senses' (R), nor 'lord of the body and other material elements' (Ś).

4. (Vs 9) Or, 'resorting to,' cf. iv. 6; more literally, 'presiding over' or 'taking his stand upon.'

5. (Vs 16) *kūṣastha*; see notes on vi. 8, xii. 3.

## Notes on Chapter XVI

1. (Vs 2) Or, 'liberality.' Ś, 'renunciation, because generosity has been mentioned (in vs 1)'; most interpreters follow him. But his reason is not conclusive; such lists often contain duplications. And R says 'liberality.'

2. (Vs 7) I.e., what should or should not be done; cf. xviii. 30. So Telang, Deussen. The expressions are very general; Ś, R, and most moderns are too specific.

3. (Vs 10) Cf. xvii. 19.

4. (Vs 17) So Ś; R, 'of the arrogance of wealth and pride,' which is implausible (cf. vs 10).

5. (Vs 19) Garbe and Senart take this closely with *narādhamān*: 'the lowest men in the round of existences.' This misses the point; *saṃsāreṣu* clearly goes with *kṣipāmi*.

## Notes on Chapter XVII

1. (Vs 5) So Garbe, Deussen, Senart (and Telang, but with 'stubbornness' for 'violence'); Ś, Barnett, Hill, 'with the power of desire and passion'; R does not explain the word.

2. (Vs 19) Cf. xvi. 10.

3. (Vs 23) R says *brahman* here means the Veda. In a sense he is right; but this hardly tells the whole story. The Veda is conceived as the mystic verbal expression of the Absolute, the one universal power. Hill's summary, p. 93, is excellent. Verse 24 refers to ritualists, 25 to followers of the 'way of knowledge,' 26 and 27 to followers of 'practical' methods. *Om* is the ritualistic sacred syllable; *tat* suggests the mystic, magic monism of the Upaniṣads (*tat tvam asi*, etc.); *sat* is sufficiently explained in vs 26.

## Notes on Chapter XVIII

1. (Vs 13) Sāṃkhya; see ii. 39 and note.

2. (Vs 14) Much needless trouble has been caused by this verse, owing to attempts to make it too philosophical, and particularly to make it fit the theories of the later so-called Sāṃkhya system. It is a quite simple and naive attempt to suggest the factors which are involved in carrying out any action whatever; it is fundamentally wrong to try to identify each 'factor' with bodily parts or 'Sāṃkhya' *tattvas*. Each of the five words is to be taken in the simplest possible sense, and no comment is really needed — except that all existing comments are worthless and misleading.

3. (Vs 18) Cf. xiii. 20, where the three elements are *kārya*, *kaṛaṇa*, and *karṭṛ*. Here *kārya* is (rather poorly) replaced by *karman*.

4. (Vs 19) Not 'the Sāṃkhya system' (Ś, Telang, Garbe).

5. (Vs 22) Or, 'with true reason.'

6. (Vs 37) So Deussen; or, 'of one's own intelligence' (so Ś, first rendering, and Barnett, Hill). R, and alternatively Ś, followed by Telang, Garbe, Senart, 'from clarity of knowledge of the self.'

7. (Vs 46) Or, 'origin.'

8. (Vs 57) See note on v. 10.

9. (Vs 61) As puppets in a puppet-play, according to Ś's plausible suggestion.

## **VOLUME TWO**

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**FIRST PART**  
**PRELIMINARY CHAPTERS**





## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

TO MOST good Vishnuites, and indeed to most Hindus, the Bhagavad Gītā is what the New Testament is to good Christians. It is their chief devotional book. In it many millions of Indians have for centuries found their principal source of religious inspiration.

In form, it consists mainly of a long dialog, which is almost a monolog. The principal speaker is Kṛṣṇa, who in his human aspect is merely one of the secondary heroes of the Mahābhārata, the great Hindu epic. But, according to the Gītā itself, he is in truth a manifestation of the Supreme Deity in human form. Hence the name — the Song (*gītā*) of the Blessed One or the Lord (*Bhagavad*).<sup>1</sup> The other speaker in the dialog is Arjuna, one of the five sons of Pāṇḍu who are the principal heroes of the Mahābhārata. The conversation between Arjuna and Kṛṣṇa is supposed to take place just before the battle which is the main theme of the great epic. Kṛṣṇa is acting as Arjuna's charioteer. Arjuna sees in the ranks of the opposing army a large number of his own kinsmen and intimate friends. He is horror-stricken at the thought of fighting against them, and forthwith lays down his weapons, saying he would rather be killed than kill them. Kṛṣṇa replies, justifying the fight on various grounds, the chief of which is that man's real self or soul is immortal and independent of the body; it "neither kills nor is killed"; it has no part in either the actions or the sufferings of the body. In response to further questions by Arjuna, he gradually develops views of life and destiny as a whole, which it is the purpose of this book to explain. In the course of the exposition he declares himself to be the Supreme Godhead, and reveals to Arjuna, as a special act of grace, a vision of his mystic supernal form. All this apparently goes on while the two armies stand drawn up in battle array, waiting to attack each other. This dramatic absurdity need not concern us seriously. It is likely that the Bhagavad Gītā was not a part of the original epic narrative. Possibly it was composed, or inserted in its present position, by a later interpolator.<sup>2</sup> To be sure, he must have had in

<sup>1</sup> More fully and exactly, the title of the work is "the mystic doctrines (*upaniṣad*) sung (or proclaimed) by the Blessed One."

<sup>2</sup> Such interpolations are numerous in the Mahābhārata; so numerous that we may fairly regard them as a regular habit. The great epic early attained such prestige among the Hindus that later authors were eager to win immortality for their works by framing them in so distinguished a setting. If the author of the Bhagavad Gītā used an older work to frame his own, he merely followed a custom which was not only common, but seemed

mind the dramatic situation in which he has placed the Gītā, for he repeatedly makes reference to it. But these references are purely formal and external; they do not concern the essentials of the work. We must think of the Gītā primarily as a unit, complete in itself, without reference to its surroundings. Its author, or whoever placed it in its present position, was interested chiefly in the religious doctrines to be set forth, not in external dramatic forms.

This is not to say that the author was lacking in artistic power. He was, on the contrary, a poet of no mean capacity. Indeed, we must think of his work as a poem: a religious, devotional poem. Its appeal is to the emotions rather than to the intellect. It follows that in order to understand the Gītā one must have a certain capacity for understanding its poetic, emotional point of view. One must be able and willing to adopt the poet's attitude: to feel with him. I say, to feel with him: not necessarily to think with him. It is possible to understand and enjoy sympathetically a poetic expression of an emotional attitude without sharing the poet's intellectual opinions. Philosophically speaking, the attitude of the Gītā is mystical. A mystic would probably prefer to say that it appeals to the mystic intuition, rather than to the emotions, as I put it. That is a question of terms, or perhaps better of philosophic outlook. My mystic critic would at any rate agree that it does not appeal to the reasoning faculty of mankind. The "opinions" which it presupposes or sets forth are not so much "opinions" in the intellectual sense as emotional — or, let us say if you like, intuitional — points of view. They are not supported by logic; they are simply proclaimed, as immediately perceived by the soul, or revealed by the grace of God. It is not my purpose to discuss their validity. That would indeed be futile. To the mystic they are above reason, to the rationalist below it; to both they are disconnected with it. Either you accept them immediately, without argument, or you do not. Argument will not move you in either case. But even a convinced rationalist, if he has some power of poetic appreciation, can follow much of the Gītā's presentation with sympathy, the sort of sympathy which would be inspired in him by any exalted poetry.

The poetic inspiration found in many of the Gītā's lines<sup>3</sup> can hardly be fully appreciated unless they are presented in a poetic form. We are fortunate in having a beautiful English rendering by Sir Edwin Arnold, from which those who cannot read Sanskrit may get, on the whole, a good idea of the living spirit of the poem. It takes a poet to reproduce poetry. Arnold was a poet, and a very gifted one. I am very glad to be able to re-

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to the Hindu mind entirely natural and innocent. The Hindus of ancient times had little notion of what we consider the rights of authorship. To their minds any literary composition belonged to the world, not to its author.

<sup>3</sup> Not all of them; it must be confessed that the Gītā is sometimes commonplace.

produce his rendering in this volume. My own function is that of an analytic commentator; a more humble function, but one which has its uses, particularly in the case of a work that was produced in a place and at a time so remote from us.

This remoteness in time and scene makes exceptionally important one of the critic's duties: that of making clear the historical setting of his author. As every author, even the most inspired of poets and prophets, is a product of his environment, so we cannot understand the Bhagavad Gītā without knowing something of doctrines which flourished in its native land, during and before its time. It was composed in India, in Sanskrit, the ancient sacred and literary language of Brahmanic civilization. We do not know its author's name (indeed, almost all the early literature of India is anonymous). Nor can we date it with any accuracy; all that we can say is that it was probably composed before the beginning of our era, but not more than a few centuries before it. We do know this: it was preceded by a long literary and intellectual activity, covering perhaps a thousand years or even more, and reaching back to the hymns of the Rīg-Veda itself, the oldest monument of Hindu literature. And the Gītā's sayings are rooted in those of this older literature. It was born out of the same intellectual environment. It quotes from older works several stanzas and parts of stanzas. There are few important expressions found in the Gītā which cannot be paralleled from more ancient works. Its originality consists mainly in a difference of emphasis, in a fuller development of some inherited themes, and in some significant omissions of themes which were found in its predecessors.

It is equally true, tho less important for our purposes, that the Bhagavad Gītā itself has had an enormous influence on later Hindu religious literature. It has even had some influence on European and American literature of the last century, during which it became known to the western world. To mention one instance: a verse found in the Gītā was imitated by Emerson in the first verse of his poem on "Brahma":

If the red slayer think he slays,  
Or if the slain think he is slain,  
They know not well the subtle ways  
I keep, and pass, and turn again.

Compare Bhagavad Gītā ii. 19:

Who believes him a slayer,  
And who thinks him slain,  
Both these understand not:  
He slays not, is not slain.

To be sure, this stanza is not original with the Gītā; it is quoted from the Katha Upaniṣad. It is more likely, however, that Emerson got it from the Gītā than from the less well-known Upaniṣad text. But the later influence of the Gītā lies outside the scope of this volume. I shall content myself with setting forth the doctrines of the Gītā and their origins.

Especially close is the connection between the Bhagavad Gītā and the class of works called Upaniṣads. These are the earliest extensive treatises dealing with philosophical subjects in India. About a dozen of them, at least, are older than the Gītā, whose author knew and quoted several. The Gītā itself is indeed regarded as an Upaniṣad (its manuscripts regularly call it so in their colophons), and has quite as good a right to the title as many later works that are so called.<sup>4</sup> All the works properly called Upaniṣads have this in common, that they contain mainly speculations on some or all of the following topics: the nature of the universe, its origin, purpose, and guiding principle; the nature of man, his physical and his "hyper-physical" constitution, his duty, his destiny, and his relation to the rest of the universe, particularly to the guiding principle thereof, whether treated personally or impersonally. Now, these are precisely the questions with which the Bhagavad Gītā is concerned. The answers attempted vary greatly, not only in different Upaniṣads, but often in adjoining parts of the same Upaniṣad. This also is true of the Gītā, and is eminently characteristic of the literature to which it and the Upaniṣads belong. We sometimes hear of a "system" of the Upaniṣads. In my opinion there is no such thing. Nor is there a "system" of thought in the Bhagavad Gītā, in the sense of a unitary, logically coherent, and exclusive structure of metaphysics. He who looks for such a thing in any work of this period will be disappointed. Or, worse yet, he may be tempted to apply Procrustean methods, and by excisions or strained interpretations to force into a unified mold the sayings of a writer who never dreamed of the necessity or desirability of such unity. The Upaniṣads and the Bhagavad Gītā contain starts toward various *systems*; but none of them contains a single *system*, except possibly in the sense that one trend may be more prominent than its rivals in an individual work or part of a work. Still less can we speak of a single system as taught by the Upaniṣads as a whole.

The very notion of a philosophic "system" did not exist in India in the time of the early Upaniṣads and the Gītā. In later times the Hindus produced various systems of philosophy, which are fairly comparable with what we are accustomed to understand by that term, despite a clearly professed practical purpose which we moderns do not usually associate with

<sup>4</sup> The word *upaniṣad* may be translated "secret, mystic doctrine"; it is a title that is often claimed by all sorts of works, some of which hardly deserve to be called philosophical in any sense.

"philosophy." These systems all grew, at least in large measure, out of the older speculations of the Upaniṣads. Each later thinker chose out of the richness of Upaniṣadic thought such elements as pleased him, and constructed his logically coherent system on that basis. Thus, the Upaniṣads, broadly speaking, are the prime source of all the rival philosophies of later India. But they themselves are more modest. They do not claim to have succeeded in bringing under one rubric the absolute and complete truth about man and the universe. If they seem at times to make such claims, these statements are to be understood as tentative, not final; and often they are contradicted by an adjoining passage in which a very different viewpoint finds expression. This may seem to us naive. But I think it would be truer, as well as more charitable, to regard it as a sign of intellectual modesty, combined with an honest and burning eagerness for truth, conceived as leading to man's mastery over his environment.

Thus there grew up in Upaniṣadic circles not one but a group of attempts to solve the "riddles of the universe." The Bhagavad Gītā, we have seen, belongs to these circles intellectually, and many of its favorite themes are derived from the older Upaniṣads. More important than this is the fact that it shares with them the trait of intellectual fluidity or tentativeness to which I have just referred. Unlike many later Hindu philosophic works, which also derive from the Upaniṣads but which select and systematize their materials, the Gītā is content to present various rival formulas, admitting at least a provisional validity to them all. To be sure, it has its favorites. But we can usually find in its own text expressions which, in strict logic, contradict its most cardinal doctrines. From the non-logical, mystical viewpoint of the Gītā this is no particular disadvantage. Rationalistic logic simply does not apply to its problems.

In one other respect there is an important difference of fundamental attitude between the Bhagavad Gītā and most western philosophic thought. All Hindu philosophy has a practical aim. It seeks the truth, but not the truth for its own sake. It is truth as a means of human salvation that is its object. In other words, all Hindu philosophy is religious in basis. To the Hindu mind, "the truth shall make you free." Otherwise there is no virtue in it. This is quite as true of the later systems as of the early and less systematic speculations. To all of them knowledge is a means to an end. This attitude has its roots in a still more primitive belief, which appears clearly in the beginnings of Vedic philosophy and is still very much alive in the early Upaniṣads: the belief in the magic power of knowledge. To the early Hindus, as to mankind in early stages of development the world over, "knowledge is power" in a very direct sense. Whatever you know you control, directly, and by virtue of your knowledge. The primitive magician gets his neighbors, animal, human, or supernatural, into his power, by ac-

quiring knowledge of them. So the early Vedic thinkers sought to control the most fundamental and universal powers by *knowing* them. This belief the Hindus of classical times never quite outgrew. The Sanskrit word *vidyā*, "knowledge," means also "magic." Let westerners not be scornful of this. Down to quite modern times the same idea prevailed in Europe. In Shakespeare's *Tempest*, Prospero the scholar proves his learning by feats of magic; and in Robert Greene's play, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, Roger Bacon, the greatest of medieval English scholars, is represented as a mighty magician, and a contest of scholarship between him and a rival German scholar resolves itself into a mere test of their powers in necromancy. In short, knowledge meant primarily magic power, to the popular mind of that day. Even tho Greene doubtless intended his play as a farce, and did not take this notion seriously, still he would not have parodied the belief if it had not flourished in his time. As in Europe, so in India, the more advanced thinkers early began to keep their speculations free from magic, in its cruder forms. Even such a comparatively early work as the Bhagavad Gītā has no traces of the magical use of knowledge for the attainment of trivial, worldly ends, tho many such traces are still found in the Upaniṣads, its immediate predecessors. To this extent it marks an advance over them, and stands on essentially the same footing with the best of the later systematic philosophies. But the Bhagavad Gītā and the later systems agree with the early Upaniṣadic thinkers in their practical attitude towards speculation. They all seek the truth, not because of its abstract interest, but because in some sense or other they think that a realization of the truth about man's place in the universe and his destiny will solve all man's problems; free him from all the troubles of life; in short, bring him to the *summum bonum*, whatever they conceive that to be. Just as different thinkers differ as to what that truth is, so they also differ in their definitions of salvation or of the *summum bonum*, and of the best practical means of attaining it. Indeed, as we have seen, the early thinkers, including the author of the Gītā, frequently differ with themselves on such points. But they all agree in this fundamental attitude towards the objects of speculation. They are primarily religious rather than philosophical. And the historic origin of their attitude, in primitive notions about the magic power of knowledge, has left a trace which I think was never fully effaced, altho it was undoubtedly transcended and transfigured.

## CHAPTER II

### THE ORIGINS OF HINDU SPECULATION

THE records of Hindu religious thought, as of Hindu literature in general, begin with the Rig Veda. This is a collection consisting mostly of hymns of praise and prayer to a group of deities who are primarily personified powers of nature — sun, fire, wind, sky, and the like — with the addition of some gods whose original nature is obscure. The religion represented by the Rig Veda, however, is by no means a simple or primitive nature-worship. Before the dawn of history it had developed into a ritualistic cult, a complicated system of sacrifices, the performance of which was the class privilege of a guild of priests. In the hands of this priestly class the sacrificial cult became more and more elaborate, and occupied more and more the center of the stage. At first merely a means of gratification and propitiation of the gods, the sacrifice gradually became an end in itself, and finally, in the period succeeding the hymns of the Rig Veda, the gods became supernatural beings. The now all-important sacrifices no longer persuaded, but compelled them to do what the sacrificer desired; or else, at times, the sacrifice produced the desired result immediately, without any participation whatsoever on the part of the gods. The gods are even spoken of themselves as offering sacrifices; and it is said that they owe their divine position, or their very existence, to the sacrifice. This extreme glorification of the ritual performance appears in the period of the Brāhmaṇas, theological textbooks whose purpose is to expound the mystic meaning of the various rites. They are later in date than the Rig-Vedic hymns; and their religion, a pure magical ritualism, is the apotheosis, or the *reductio ad absurdum*, of the ritualistic nature-worship of the hymns.

Even in Rig-Vedic times the priestly ritual was so elaborate, and so expensive, that in the nature of things only rich men, mainly princes, could engage in it. It was therefore not only a hieratic but an aristocratic cult. The real religion of the great mass of the people was different. We find it portrayed best in the Atharva Veda. This is a collection of hymns, or rather magic charms, intended to accompany a mass of simpler rites and ceremonies which were not connected with the hieratic cult of the Rig Veda. Almost every conceivable human need and aspiration is represented by these popular performances. Their religious basis may be described as primitive animism, and their method of operation as simple magic. That is, they regard all creatures, things, powers, and even abstract principles, as volitional potencies or "spirits," or as animated by "spirits," which they seek

to control by incantations and magic rites. They know also the higher gods of the Rig-Vedic pantheon, and likewise other gods which perhaps belonged at the start to aboriginal, non-"Aryan" tribes ("Aryan" is the name which the Vedic Hindus apply to themselves). But they invoke these gods after the manner of magic-mongers, much as medieval European incantations invoke the persons of the Trinity and Christian saints in connection with magic practices to heal a broken bone or to bring rain for the crops.

Later Hindu thought developed primarily out of the hieratic, Rig-Vedic religion; but it contains also quite a dash of lower, more popular beliefs. The separation of the two elements is by no means always easy. The truth seems to be that the speculations out of which the later forms of thought developed were carried on mainly by priests, adherents of the hieratic ritual religion. Almost all the intellectual leaders of the community belonged to the priestly class. But they were naturally — almost inevitably — influenced by the popular religion which surrounded them. Indeed, there was no opposition between the two types of religion, nor such a cleavage as our description may suggest. The followers of the hieratic cult also engaged in the practices that belonged to the more popular religion. This accounts for the constant infiltration from the "lower" sphere into the "higher," which we see going on at all periods. At times it is hard to decide whether a given new development is due to the intrusion of popular beliefs, or to internal evolution within the sphere of the priestly religion itself.

For we can clearly see the growth of certain new views within the Rig Veda itself. Out of the older ritualistic nature-worship, with its indefinite plurality of gods, arises in many Rig-Vedic hymns a new attitude, a sort of mitigated polytheism, to which has been given the name of *henotheism*. By this is meant a religious point of view which, when dealing for the moment with any particular god, seems to feel it as an insult to his dignity to admit the competition of other deities. And so, either the particular god of the moment is made to absorb all the others, who are declared to be manifestations of him; or else, he is given attributes which in strict logic could only be given to a sole monotheistic deity. Thus various Vedic gods are each at different times declared to be the creator, preserver, and animator of the universe, the sole ruler of all creatures, human and divine, and so on. Such hymns, considered separately, seem clearly to imply monotheism; but all that they really imply is a ritualistic henotheism. As each god comes upon the stage in the procession of rites, he is impartially granted this increasingly extravagant praise, until everything that could be said of all the gods collectively is said of each of them in turn, individually. We see that Vedic henotheism is rooted in the hieratic ritual, without which it perhaps would hardly have developed.



But it was not long before some advanced thinkers saw that such things as the creation of the world and the rulership over it could really be predicated only of one Personality. The question then arose, how to name and define that One? We might have expected that some one of the old gods would be erected into a truly monotheistic deity. But, perhaps because none of them seemed sufficiently superior to his fellows, perhaps for some other reason, this was not done. Instead, in a few late hymns of the Rig Veda we find various tentative efforts to establish a new deity in this supreme position. Different names are given to him: "the Lord of Creatures" (Prajāpati), "the All-maker" (Viśvakarman), and the like. As these names show, the new figure is rather abstract, and no longer ritualistic. Yet it is still personal. It is a *God* who creates, supports, and rules the world; a kind of Yahweh or Allah; not an impersonal First Cause. It is an attempt at monotheism, not yet monism.

These starts toward monotheism remained abortive, in the sense that they did not, at least directly, result in the establishment of a monotheistic religion comparable to that of the Hebrew people. Some centuries were to pass before such religions gained any strong foothold in India; and the connection between them and these early suggestions is remote and tenuous. The later religions owe their strength largely to other elements of more popular origin. Yet sporadic and more or less tentative suggestions of the sort continued to be made.

More striking, and more significant for the later development of Hindu philosophy, is a movement towards *monism* which appears, along with the monotheistic movement, even in the Rig Veda itself, tho only tentatively and very rarely. One or two Rig-Vedic hymns attempt to formulate the One in strictly impersonal, non-theistic terms. Among these I must mention the one hundred and twenty-ninth hymn of the tenth book of the Rig Veda, which to my mind is a very remarkable production, considering its time and place. This "hymn" (for so we can hardly help calling it, since it is found in the "hymn-book" of the Rig Veda) also seeks to explain the universe as evolving out of One; but its One is no longer a god. It knows no Yahweh or Allah, any more than the ritualistic Indra or Varuṇa. It definitely brushes aside all gods, not indeed denying their existence, but declaring that they are all of late and secondary origin; they know nothing of the beginnings of things. The First Principle of this hymn is "That One" (*tad ekam*). It is of neuter gender, as it were lest some theologian should get hold of it and insist on falling down and worshipping it. It is not only impersonal and non-theistic, but absolutely uncharacterizable and indescribable, without qualities or attributes, even negative ones. It was "neither existent nor non-existent." To seek to know it is hopeless; in the last two verses of the hymn (there are only seven in all) the author relapses into a negative style of ex-

pression which remains characteristic of Hindu higher thought in certain moods. While the later Upaniṣads often try to describe the One all-inclusively, by saying that it is *everything*, that it contains all possible and conceivable characteristics; still in some of their deepest moments they too prefer the negative statement *neti, neti*<sup>1</sup> — “No, no.” To apply to it any description is to limit and bound that which is limitless and boundless. It cannot be described; it cannot be known.

But the ancient Hindu thinkers could never resign themselves to this negation. Even if they sometimes recognized that they could not, in the nature of things, know the Unknowable, still their restless speculation kept returning to the struggle again and again, from ever varied points of attack. In the Rig Veda itself, in one of its latest hymns (10.90), appears the first trace of a strain of monistic thought which is of the greatest importance for later Hindu philosophy: the universe is treated as parallel in nature to the human personality. The First Principle in this hymn is called *Puruṣa*, that is, “Man” or “Person.” From the several parts of this cosmic Person are derived, by a still rather crude process of evolution, all existing things. The significance of this lies in its anticipation of the Upaniṣadic view of the identity of the human soul (later called *ātman*, literally “self,” as a rule) with the universal principle.

Other, later Vedic texts, especially the Atharva Veda, also contain speculative materials. They are extremely varied in character; they testify to the restlessness and tentativeness which we have seen as a characteristic of all early Hindu thought. At times they seem monotheistic in tendency. The “Lord of Creatures,” *Prajāpati*, of the Rig Veda, appears again and again, as a kind of demiurge; and other names are invented for the same or a similar figure, such as the “Establisher,” *Dhātār*, or the “Arranger,” *Vidhātār*, or “He that is in the Highest,” *Parameṣṭhin*. But never does such a figure attain anything like the definite dignity which we associate with a genuine monotheistic deity. And more often the interest centers around less personal, more abstract entities, either physical or metaphysical, or more or less both at once. The sun, especially under the mystic name of *Rohita*, “the Ruddy One,” enjoys a momentary glory in several Atharva-Vedic charms, which invest him with the functions of a cosmic principle. Or the world is developed out of water; we are reminded of Thales, the first of the Greek philosophers. The wind, regarded as the most subtle of physical elements and as the “life-breath” (*prāṇa*) of the universe, plays at times a like role, and by being compared with man’s life-breath it contributes to the development of the cosmic “Person” (*Puruṣa*) of the Rig Veda into the later *Ātman* or Soul (of man) as the Supreme One. The word *ātman*

itself seems actually to be used in this way in one or two late verses of the Atharva Veda.<sup>2</sup> The power of Time (*kāla*), or of Desire (*kāma*) — a sort of cosmic Will, reminding us of Schopenhauer — is elsewhere treated as the force behind the evolution of the universe. Or, still more abstractly, the world-all is derived from a hardly defined "Support," that is, a "Fundamental Principle" (*skambha*), on which everything rests. These and other shadowy figures flit across the stage of later Vedic speculation. Individually, few of them have enough definiteness or importance to merit much attention. But in the mass they are of the greatest value for one who would follow the development of Hindu speculation as a whole.

The real underlying motive and rationale of all this "monism," this seeking for a single principle in the universe, cannot be understood without reference to the principle of *identification* as it appears in early Vedic texts; most clearly in the Brāhmaṇas (above, p. 9). A very striking feature of these works is their passion for identification of one thing with another, on the slenderest possible basis; indeed, often on no basis at all that we can discover. The purpose was strictly practical; more specifically, magical. It was to get results by setting cosmic forces in motion. To this end a cosmic force was said to "be" this or that other thing, which other thing we can control. "By grasping or controlling one of the two identified entities, the possessor of the mystic knowledge as to their identity has power over the other, which is in fact no other"<sup>3</sup> but really the same. For instance, "the cow is breath"; I control a cow, therefore I control breath, my own life-breath, or some one else's. That is the only reason for the fantastic identification. We want to control, let us say, the breath of life, in ourselves or some one else (perhaps an enemy): so we earnestly and insistently identify it with something that we *can* control, and the trick is turned. It required only a slight extension of this to arrive at the notion that if we can only "know" the one principle of the whole universe, the one which is to be *identified* with "all," with every thing that is, we shall then control all, and be able to deal with the universe as we please.<sup>4</sup> So all Vedic speculation is eminently practical. As we said above, metaphysical truth *per se* and for its own sake is not its object. Earnest and often profound tho these thinkers are, they never lose sight for long of their practical aim, which is to control, by virtue of their superior knowledge, the cosmic forces which they study. That is why so many of their speculations are imbedded in the Atharva Veda, a book of magic spells, which to our minds would seem the most inappropriate place possible.

<sup>2</sup> 10.8.43, 44.

<sup>3</sup> H. Oldenberg, *Vorwissenschaftliche Wissenschaft*, Göttingen, 1910, p. 110.

<sup>4</sup> See my article, "The Upaniads, what do they seek and why?" *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 49.97 ff.

It might seem to follow from this that the speculative activity of this period belonged to the popular sphere represented by the religion of the Atharva Veda, more than to the ritualistic cult that was the heir of the Rig Veda. But I think there is evidence to the contrary. However appropriate to the spirit of the popular religion it seemed in some respects, this activity was carried on mainly by the priests of the hieratic ritual. And this fact, which for various reasons seems to me indubitable, finds a striking concrete expression in a philosophic term developed in this period which deserves special consideration.

Among all the varied formulations of the First and Supreme Principle, none recurs more constantly thruout the later Vedic texts than the *brahman*. The oldest meaning of this word seems to be "holy knowledge," "sacred utterance," or (what to primitive man is the same thing) its concrete expression, "hymn" or "incantation." It is applied both to the ritual hymns of the Rig Veda and to the magic charms of the Atharva Veda. Any holy, mystic utterance is *brahman*. This is the regular, if not the exclusive, meaning which the word has in the Rig Veda. But from the point of view of those times, this definition implies far more than it would suggest to our minds. The spoken word had a mysterious, supernatural power; it contained within itself the essence of the thing denoted. To "know the name" of anything was to control the thing. The *word* means wisdom, knowledge; and knowledge, as we have seen, was (magic) power. So *brahman*, the "holy word," soon came to mean the mystic power inherent in the holy word.

But to the later Vedic ritualists, this holy word was the direct expression and embodiment of the ritual religion, and as such a cosmic power of the first magnitude. The ritual religion, and hence its verbal expression, the *brahman*, was omnipotent; it was "all." All human desires and aspirations were accessible to him who mastered it. All other cosmic forces, even the greatest of natural and supernatural powers, were dependent upon it. The gods themselves, originally the beneficiaries of the cult, became its helpless mechanical agents, or were left out of account altogether as useless middlemen. The cult was the direct controlling force of the universe. And the *brahman* was the spirit, the expression, of the cult; nay, it *was* the cult, mystically speaking, because the word and the thing were one; he who knew the word, knew and controlled the thing. Therefore, he who knew the *brahman* knew and controlled the whole universe. It is no wonder, then, that in the later Vedic texts (not yet in the Rig Veda) we find the *brahman* frequently mentioned as the primal principle<sup>5</sup> and as the ruling and guiding spirit of the universe. It is a thoroly ritualistic notion, inconceivable ex-

<sup>5</sup> "There is nothing more ancient or higher than this *brahman*," Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa, 10.3.5.11.

cept as an outgrowth of the theories of the ritualistic cult, but very simple and as it were self-evident from the point of view of the ritualists. The overwhelming prominence and importance of the *brahman* in later Vedic speculation seems, therefore, a striking proof of the fact that this speculation was at least in large part a product of ritualistic, priestly circles.

Not content with attempts to identify the One, the Vedic thinkers also try to define His, or Its, relation to the empiric world. Here again their suggestions are many and varied. Often the One is a sort of demiurge, a Creator, Father, First Cause. Such theistic expressions may be used of impersonal monistic names for the One as well as of more personal, quasi-monotheistic ones. The One is compared to a carpenter or a smith; he joins or smelts the world into being. Or his act is like an act of generation; he begets all beings. Still more interestingly, his creative activity is compared to a sacrifice, a ritual performance, or to prayer, or religious fervor (*dhi*, *tapas*). This obviously ritualistic imagery appears even in the Rig Veda itself, in several of its philosophic hymns. In the Puruṣa hymn, already referred to, the universe is derived from the sacrifice of the cosmic Person, the Puruṣa; the figure is of the dismemberment of a sacrificial animal; from each of the members of the cosmic Puruṣa evolved a part of the existing world. The performers of this cosmogonic sacrifice are "the gods," — inconsistently, of course, for the gods have already been declared to be secondary to the Puruṣa, who transcends all existing things. In later Vedic times we repeatedly meet with such ritualistic expressions. They confirm our feeling that we are dealing with priests.

We see from what has just been said of the Puruṣa hymn that the One — here the Puruṣa, the cosmic "Person" or "man" — may be regarded as the material source (*causa materialis*) as well as the creator (*causa efficiens*) of the world. All evolves out of it, or is a part of it; but frequently, as in the Puruṣa hymn, it is *more* than all empiric existence; it transcends all things, which form, or derive from, but a part of it. Again, it is often spoken of as the ruler, controller, or lord of all. Or, it is the foundation, fundament, upon which all is based, which supports all. Still more significant are passages which speak of the One as subtly pervading all, as air or ether or space (*ākāśa*) pervades the physical universe, and animating all, as the breath of life (*prāṇa*) is regarded as both pervading and animating the human body.

Such expressions as this last lead to a modification, with mitigation of the crudity, of the above-noted parallelism between man, the microcosm, and the universe, the macrocosm, which as we have seen dates from late Rig-Vedic times. In the Puruṣa hymn of the Rig Veda we find a crude evolution of various parts of the physical universe from the parts of the physical body of the cosmic "Man." But in the later Vedic texts the feeling grows that man's nature is not accounted for by dissecting his physical body —

and, correspondingly, that there must be something more in the universe than the sum total of its physical elements. What is that "something more" in man? Is it the "life-breath" or "life-breaths" (*prāṇa*), which seem to be in and thru various parts of the human body and to be the principle of man's life (since they leave the body at death)? So many Vedic thinkers believed. What, then, is the corresponding "life-breath" of the universe? Obviously the wind, say some. Others think of it as the *ākāśa*, "ether," or "space." But even these presently seem too physical, too material. On the human side, too, it begins to be evident that the "life-breath," like its cosmic counterpart the wind, is in reality physical. Surely the essential Man must be something else. What then? Flittingly, here and there, it is suggested that it may be man's "desire" or "will" (*kāma*), or his "mind" (*manas*), or something else of a more or less "psychological" nature. But already in the Atharva Veda, and with increasing frequency later, we find as an expression for the real, essential part of Man the word *ātman* used. *Ātman* means simply "self"; it is used familiarly as a reflexive pronoun, like the German *sich*. One could hardly get a more abstract term for that which is left when everything unessential is deducted from man, and which is at the same time to be considered the principle of his life, the living soul that pervades his being. And, carrying on the parallelism, we presently find mention of the *ātman*, self or soul, of the universe. The texts do not content themselves with that; they continue to speculate as to what that "soul" of the universe is. But these speculations tend to become more and more remote from purely physical elements. Increasing partiality is shown for such metaphysical expressions as "the existent," or "that which is" (*sat*),<sup>6</sup> or again "the non-existent" (*asat*); in the Rig-Vedic hymn 10.129 we were told that in the beginning there was "neither existent nor non-existent," but later we find both "the existent" and "the non-existent" used as expressions for the first principle. But perhaps the favorite formula in later Vedic times for the soul of the universe is the originally ritualistic one of the *brahman*.

If we remember the Brāhmaṇa principle of identification by mystic knowledge for purposes of magical control, set forth above, we shall now be able to understand the standard answer given in the Upaniṣads to the question "With what shall we identify the one thing, by knowing which all is known?" That answer is: "With the soul, the *ātman*, of man." Obviously; for whether it be called *Brahman*, or the existent, or what-not, the

<sup>6</sup> Compare the Greek τὸ ὄν or τὸ ὄντως ὄν, "that which (really) is," and, for a less exact parallel, the Kantian *Ding an sich*. But the "existent," the "being," that which (really) is, whether in man or in the universe, was probably not so abstract or metaphysical as we feel the corresponding western phrases. The Sanskrit word must be understood from the magical standpoint which I have described.

One is naturally the essential self or "soul," *ātman*, of the universe. If it is *ātman*, and my soul, my real self, is also *ātman*, then is not the mystic identification ready-made? By "knowing" the one I may "know" — *and control* — the other. And surely there is nothing which I control more obviously and perfectly than my own "self." If now I "know" that the Brahman, which is the *ātman* of the universe, is my own *ātman*, then not only do I control the fundamental principle of the universe, because knowledge is magic power; but even more than that, I *am* the fundamental principle of the universe, by mystic identification. For this double reason, there is nothing beyond my grasp. Thus the knowledge of the One which is All, and its identification with the human soul, is a short-cut to the satisfaction of all desires, the freedom from all fear and danger and sorrow.

## CHAPTER III

### THE UPANIṢADS, AND THE FUNDAMENTAL DOCTRINES OF LATER HINDU THOUGHT

THE Upaniṣads are the earliest Hindu treatises, other than single hymns or brief passages, which deal with philosophic subjects. They are formally parts of the Veda,<sup>1</sup> — the last offshoots of Vedic literature. The dry bones of the Vedic ritual cult rattle about in them in quite a noisy fashion at times, and seriously strain our patience and our charity. But they also contain the apotheosis, the New Testament, of Vedic philosophy. In them the struggling speculations which we have briefly sketched in the last chapter reach their highest development. They do not, be it noted, receive any final, systematic codification. That came much later. They are still tentative, fluid, and, one may fairly say, unstable; they are frequently inconsistent with each other and with themselves. They contain no system, but start toward various different systems. Later Hindu thought utilized these starts and developed them into the various systematic philosophies of later times — Sāṃkhya, Vedānta, and the rest. In fact, there are few important terms of later Hindu philosophical or religious thought which are not at least foreshadowed in the Upaniṣads. They are the connecting link between the Veda and later Hinduism; the last word of the one, the prime source of the other.

In this chapter, I wish to deal with the Upaniṣads mostly from the latter point of view: to show how they reveal the early stages of the fundamental postulates of later Hindu thought. While the views reproduced in this chapter are all found in the early Upaniṣads (except where the contrary is stated), we also find in them expressions of quite different views, which approach much more closely the older Vedic speculations. The relation of the Upaniṣads to those earlier speculations may, in general, be described by saying that while the Upaniṣads carry their inquiries along essentially the same lines, and are actuated by the same basic belief in the mystic, magic power of knowledge, their interests become increasingly anthropocentric and less cosmo-physical or ritualistic. Explanations of the cosmic absolute in purely physical terms, and speculations about the esoteric meaning of ritual entities, while they still occur, become less prominent; speculations on the nature and fate of man, and explanations of the universe in human or quasi-human terms, increase in frequency. Thus one of the most striking

<sup>1</sup> At least the older and more genuine ones are that; we may ignore for our present purpose the numerous late and secondary works which call themselves Upaniṣads.



dogmas in the Upaniṣads is that the human soul or self is the Absolute ("that art thou";<sup>2</sup> "I am Brahman";<sup>3</sup> "it [the universal Brahman] is thy self, that is within everything";<sup>4</sup> "that which rests in all things and is distinct from all things, which all things know not, of which all things are the body [that is, the material representation or form], which controls all things within, that is thy self [*ātman*], the immortal Inner Controller").<sup>5</sup> All that is outside of this Self is at times viewed as created by, or emitted from, It (as in dreams the Self seems to create a dream-world and to live in it).<sup>6</sup> At other times the sharp line drawn between the Self and material nature, that is all that is not Self, is made to preclude any genetic relation between the two.<sup>7</sup>

The reason for the identification of the human soul with the principle of the universe was suggested in the last chapter, but I shall summarize it once more in words which I have used elsewhere.<sup>8</sup> "The Upaniṣads seek to know the real truth about the universe, not for its own sake; not for the mere joy of knowledge; not as an abstract speculation; but simply because they conceive such knowledge as a short-cut to the control of every cosmic power. The possessor of such knowledge will be in a position to satisfy his any desire. He will be free from old age and death, from danger and sorrow, from all the ills that flesh is heir to. By knowledge of the One that is All, and by mystically identifying his own self with that One which is All, he has, like that One, the All in his control. Knowledge, true esoteric knowledge, is the magic key to omnipotence, absolute power. By it one becomes autonomous. Vedic philosophy . . . is simply an attempt to gain at one stroke all possible human ends, by *knowing*, once for all, the essential truth of the entire cosmos. If all can be known at once, and especially if it can be mystically identified with one's own 'soul,' then all will be controlled, and there will be no need of half-way measures; no need of attempting by magic

<sup>2</sup> Chāndogya Upaniṣad 6.8.7, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad 1.4.10, etc.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.4.1.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.7.15.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.3.10. According to several Upaniṣad passages the soul performs this creative act by a sort of mystic, quasi-magic power, sometimes called *māyā*, that is, "artifice"; it is a word sometimes applied to sorcery, and to tricks and stratagems of various kinds. The Bhagavad Gītā similarly speaks of the Deity as appearing in material nature by His *māyā*, His mystic power. This does not mean (in my opinion; some scholars take the contrary view) that the world outside of the self is illusory, without real existence, as the later Vedānta philosophy maintains; *māyā*, I think, is not used in the Vedāntic sense of "world-illusion" until many centuries later.

<sup>7</sup> Thus foreshadowing the later dualistic systems, such as classical Sāṃkhya and Yoga, which recognize matter and soul as two eternal and eternally independent principles -- a doctrine which is familiarly accepted in the Bhagavad Gītā.

<sup>8</sup> *Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 49.118.

to gain this or that special desideratum [which minor and special desiderata are nevertheless constantly sought in the Upaniṣads, by a natural inconsistency which only helps to prove my point]. . . . The Brahman, as an expression for the supreme power of the universe, is simply this same mystic knowledge. . . .”

In view of this, it is not strange that the attention of the Upaniṣadic thinkers is more and more centered upon the human soul. Other things are important as they are related to it. And — while its origin and past history remain objects of interest — we find an increasing amount of attention paid to its future fate. The practical purpose of speculation reasserts itself emphatically in the question, how can man control his own destiny? What is man's *summum bonum*, and how shall he attain it? It is out of such questions and the answers to them that the basic postulates of later Hindu thought develop.

In early Vedic times the objects of human desire are the ordinary ones which natural man seeks the world over: wealth, pleasures, power over his fellows, long life, and offspring; and finally, since death puts an end to the enjoyment of all these, immortality. Immortality, however, can only be hoped for in a future existence, since all life on this earth is seen to end in death. So the Vedic poets hope for some sort of heavenly and eternal life after death. But presently they begin to be uneasy lest perchance death might interfere with that future life, also. The fear of this “re-death” becomes, in what we may call the Middle Vedic period (the Brāhmaṇas), a very prominent feature. Combined with this is the growing belief in the imperishability of the *ātman*, the Self or Soul, the essential part of the living being. These two views are not mutually contradictory. Death remains, as a very disagreeable experience — no less disagreeable if it must be undergone more than once — even tho it does not destroy the Soul but only brings it over into a new existence. What pleasure can man take in wealth, power, and offspring, if this sword of Damocles is constantly hanging over him, threatening to deprive him of all, and to launch him upon some new and untried existence? Moreover, that future existence may be no better than the present one. Possibly under the influence of popular animism, which sees “souls” similar to the human soul in all parts of nature, the future life is brought down from heaven to this earth. And so, in the early Upaniṣads, we find quite definite statements of the theory of rebirth or transmigration, which was to remain thru all future time an axiom to practically all Hindus. According to this, the Soul is subject to an indefinite series of existences, in various material forms or “bodies,” either in this world or in various imaginary worlds. The Bhagavad Gītā expresses this universal Hindu belief in the form of two similes. It says that one existence follows another just as different stages of life — childhood, young manhood,

and old age — follow one another in this life.<sup>9</sup> Or again, just as one lays off old garments and dons new ones, so the Soul lays off an old, worn-out body and puts on a new one.<sup>10</sup> One of the oldest Upaniṣads uses the simile of a grass-leech, which crawls to the end of a blade of grass and then “gathers itself together” to pass over to another blade of grass; so the Soul at death “gathers itself together” and passes over to a new existence.<sup>11</sup>

The Upaniṣads also begin to combine with this doctrine of an indefinite series of reincarnations the old belief in retribution for good and evil deeds in a life after death; a belief which prevailed among the people of Vedic India, as all over the world. With the transfer of the future life from a mythical other world to this earth, and with the extension or multiplication of it to an indefinite series of future lives more or less like the present life, the way was prepared for the characteristically Hindu doctrine of “karma” (*karman*) or “deed.” This doctrine, which is also axiomatic to the Hindus, teaches that the state of each existence of each individual is absolutely conditioned and determined by that individual’s morality in previous existences. A man is exactly what he has made himself and what he therefore deserves to be. An early Upaniṣad says: “Just as (the Soul) is (in this life) of this or that sort; just as it acts, just as it operates, even so precisely it becomes (in the next life). If it acts well it becomes good; if it acts ill it becomes evil. As a result of right action it becomes what is good; as a result of evil action it becomes what is evil.”<sup>12</sup> In short, the law of the conservation of energy is rigidly applied to the moral world. Every action, whether good or bad, must have its result for the doer. If in the present life a man is on the whole good, his next existence is better by just so much as his good deeds have outweighed his evil deeds. He becomes a great and noble man, or a king, or perhaps a god (the gods, like men, are subject to the law of transmigration). Conversely, a wicked man is reborn as a person of low position, or as an animal, or, in cases of exceptional depravity, he may fall to existence in hell. And all this is not carried out by decree of some omnipotent and sternly just Power. It is a natural law. It operates of itself just as much as the law of gravitation. It is therefore wholly dispassionate, neither merciful nor vindictive. It is absolutely inescapable; but at the same time it never cuts off hope. A man is what he has made himself; but by that same token he may make himself what he will. The soul tormented in the lowest hell may raise himself in time to the highest heaven, simply by doing right. Perfect justice is made the basic law of the universe. It is a principle of great moral grandeur and perfection.

<sup>9</sup> ii. 13.

<sup>10</sup> ii. 22.

<sup>11</sup> Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 4.4.3.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.4.5.

The Upaniṣads go farther than this in anticipating later Hindu views of the Soul's progress. One of the earliest of them contains this passage: "This Spirit of Man consists simply of *desire*. As is his desire, so is his resolve; as is his resolve, so is the deed (*karman*) that he does; as is the deed that he does, so is that (fate) which he attains unto."<sup>13</sup> The root of action, and so the determining cause of man's future fate, is his "desire." It follows that if man's desires can be properly regulated, he can be led to his true goal. This remains a fundamental tenet of later Hinduism.

It might seem that the glorification of the Soul as the center of the universe should be a comforting and inspiring thought. And, indeed, the Upaniṣads and later Hindu works describe the perfections of the Soul in inspiring and even ecstatic terms. But the practical effect of all this upon the Hindu attitude towards our present life was just the opposite. It only served to emphasize the contrast between the Soul and all that is not Soul, that is, all material or empiric existence. "Whatever is other than That (the Soul) is evil," says an early Upaniṣad.<sup>14</sup> Soon this crystallizes into a definitely and thoroly pessimistic view of life. All existence, in the ordinary empiric sense, is inherently worthless and base and evil. Pleasures are both transitory and illusory. Death is not only an evil in itself, which threatens us at every moment, but also it leads only to further existence, that is, to further misery. True joy and peace can only be found in the Self.

Accordingly, the perfected man is he "*whose desire is the Soul*, whose desire is satisfied, who has no desire" (other than the Soul; that is, who is free from ordinary, worldly desires),<sup>15</sup> who "is beyond desire, has dispensed with evil, knows no fear, is free from sorrow."<sup>16</sup> As long as a man is affected by desire (other than the desire for the Soul's perfection, which, as just indicated, is the same as having *no* desire), this leads him to "resolve" and to "action," which must have its fruit in continued material existence; and all material existence is evil.

The estate of this perfected man is most commonly described as attainment of, going to, or union with the One — which may be called Brahman, or the Ātman (the Self or Soul), or some synonym. It is not non-existence, according to the Upaniṣads; for the soul is immortal, and cannot cease to be. It is sometimes even declared to be a conscious state; but this is immediately qualified by saying that tho the soul still has the faculties of seeing, knowing, and so on, there is no object for these faculties to act upon, so that after all

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.4.5.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.4.2.

<sup>15</sup> These include, typically, sensual desires of all kinds, and desire for continued existence in rebirths.

<sup>16</sup> Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 4.4.6; 4.3.22.

it is to all intents and purposes a state of unconsciousness.<sup>17</sup> As the soul is one with the universal subject, than which there is then no other, there can be no object, and hence no activity of the senses or mental faculties. So at other times the texts plainly say "there is no consciousness after death (for the perfected soul)."<sup>18</sup> They treat it as similar to the state of deep and dreamless sleep, which is indeed at times said to be a temporary union with the One, and so a foretaste of that perfected condition.<sup>19</sup> It is natural that such a state should be associated with bliss; for while the waking man has no recollection of consciousness or anything else as having existed in sound sleep, still he awakes from it feeling refreshed and perhaps with a vague impression of having been in some sort of remote and happy state. At any rate, the Upaniṣads leave no doubt that there is in this union with the One a total cessation of desires, of evil, of sorrow — in short, of ordinary, empiric, worldly existence, which is characterized by desires, evil, and sorrow. But not content with that, they describe it as a state of pure and ecstatic bliss, infinitely surpassing all human joys, indeed far exceeding the power of man to conceive it.<sup>20</sup>

Later Hindu religions and philosophies call this state by the well-known name *nirvāṇa*. This means "extinction," originally of a fire or flame; then of the flames of desire, as the cause of continued rebirth. Some later sects, such as the Buddhists, have been represented as meaning by it also literal extinction of life, of existence in any form; but with more than doubtful propriety. At any rate, even in Buddhist texts *nirvāṇa* is described as a state of blissful ecstasy. It makes no difference if, with the later Sāṃkhya, one denies the world-soul and merely regards the perfected individual souls as existing separately, independent of each other and of matter; still the same descriptions are used. All the later variations in metaphysical theory (some of them adumbrated in the Upaniṣads) make no difference in the view of the perfected state as a kind of pure and — so to speak — unconscious consciousness, and transcendent bliss. The Bhagavad Gītā uses the word *nirvāṇa* several times, generally in the compound *brahmanirvāṇa*, "extinction in Brahman," or "the extinction which is Brahman." More commonly it uses vaguer terms to describe the goal which means salvation — such expressions as "perfection," "the highest goal," "the supreme state" or "My (God's) estate." Or it simply says "he attains Me (God)," or "he attains Brahman"; that is, the perfected man becomes united with God or with Brahman. Details as to the nature of that state are wholly wanting in the Gītā, if we except such vague expressions as "that highest station of Mine, to which having gone one does not return, is not illumined by sun or moon or fire"<sup>21</sup> — implying that it shines by its own light. We are not told how

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.5.15; 4.3.23 ff.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.5.13.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.3.10 ff.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 4.3.32, 33.

<sup>21</sup> 15.6.

the Gītā regarded the state of a man who had gained this position. All that seems clear is that it was regarded as some sort of real existence, not as total and absolute annihilation.

The way to attain this state of perfection, as to attain anything else, is, according to the usual Upaniṣad doctrine, by true knowledge. Knowledge is the magic talisman that opens all doors. He who knows anything, controls it; and so, he who knows the supreme truth thereby becomes master of it, and gains the highest state. "He who knows that supreme Brahman, unto Brahman he goes."<sup>22</sup> Similar expressions appear constantly thruout the whole Upaniṣad literature. This comes as near as anything to being a universal doctrine of the Upaniṣads. It is furthermore a doctrine which is of fundamental importance in all later Hindu thought. All the later systems make it their prime business to point the way to human salvation; and one may say in general that their methods are primarily and originally intellectual, or, perhaps better, intuitive. They teach that man shall be saved thru the realization of the supreme truth. In their formulations of that truth they differ, of course, among themselves; that is the reason for the plurality of systems. But they usually state, or at least imply, the omnipotence of knowledge; and conversely they usually emphasize the fact that ignorance (*avidyā*) is the root of evil. Characteristic of them all is the Buddhist formula, which says that ignorance is the cause of desire; desire leads to action; and action must have its fruit, as we have seen, in continued existence, all of which is evil.

Even *good* deeds are still deeds, and must have their fruit, according to the doctrine of "karma." And to attain the *summum bonum* man must get rid of all deeds, of all karma. Therefore, while most if not all Hindu systems teach a practical morality, they also teach that no degree of morality, however perfect, can lead to final salvation. In this, too, they are anticipated by the Upaniṣads. The perfect soul is "beyond good and evil."<sup>23</sup> Neither good nor evil can affect him. At times the Upaniṣads seem even to say or imply that when a man has attained enlightenment, he can do what he likes without fear of results. This somewhat dangerous doctrine is, however, not typical, and is probably to be regarded only as a strained and exaggerated manner of saying that the truly enlightened soul cannot, in the very nature of things, do an evil deed. If he could, he would not be truly enlightened; for "he who has not ceased from evil conduct cannot attain Him (the Ātman) by intelligence."<sup>24</sup> This is similar to the Socratic notion that the truly wise man must inevitably be virtuous. The difference is that the Upaniṣads regard even virtue, as well as vice, as transcended by perfect

<sup>22</sup> Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad, 3.2.9; Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad, 1. 4.

<sup>23</sup> Kauṣītaki Upaniṣad, 1.4; compare Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 4.3.22, etc.

<sup>24</sup> Kāṭha Upaniṣad, 2.24.

knowledge; the possessor thereof passes beyond both, and rises to a plane on which moral terms simply have no meaning. Morality applies only in the world of karma, the world of ordinary empiric existence, which the enlightened man has left behind him. In the final state of the perfected man, as we have seen, there can be, strictly speaking, no action; so how can there be either moral or immoral action? The attitude of the Upaniṣads, and following them of most later Hindu systems, is then that morality has only a negative importance, and in the last analysis none whatever, in man's struggle for salvation. Immorality is a sign of imperfection; it can only be due to the prevalence in the soul of ignorance, causing desire, leading to action and rebirth. It must be got rid of. But it will fall away of itself with the attainment of true wisdom. And no amount of good deeds will bring that wisdom which alone can lead to release. Good deeds result in less unhappy existences, but that is all; salvation is release from all empiric existence. This does not prevent the teaching of a system of practical ethics, for the guidance of those who have not yet attained enlightenment. In actual practice, most Hindu sects inculcate very lofty moral principles; and many of them devote much attention thereto. But theoretically, at least, such things do not concern their fundamental aims.

Yet at times morality is spoken of as if it had a positive, if only qualified, value in preparing the soul for the reception of enlightenment. The fact is that the strictly intellectual or intuitional position is hard for the ordinary man to master. He needs the encouragement of more concrete aims, or helps toward the final aim. Many of the later sects recognize this, either implicitly or explicitly, and so do not hold strictly to the position that "knowledge," that is, immediate perception of the metaphysical truth, is the sole and exclusive means of salvation. Even the Upaniṣads do not quite do this, tho they come closer to it than many later systems. Despite the popular and even primitive background of their intellectualism, its relation to the old idea of the magic power of knowledge, the speculation of the Upaniṣads in its highest forms reached a point which must have placed it out of touch with the beliefs of most of the people. "Knowledge" of the abstract truth about the Soul proves a very different matter from "knowledge" of the things which are the ordinary aims of magic, when the human being tries to grasp it. Any man can "know" the "name" of his enemy, or of the disease which afflicts him, and by that "knowledge" can seek to cast a spell over them. But only a rare thinker can "know" the absolute metaphysical Truth, so that it is an ever-present illumination of his whole being,<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> "By a rare chance may a man see him (the Soul); by a rare chance likewise may another declare him; and by a rare chance may another hear (of) him. But even when he has heard (of) him, no one whatsoever knows him." *Bhagavad Gītā*, ii. 29; quoted from *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, 2.7.

and this is what he must do in order to have the true "knowledge" that brings control of his own soul, of his destiny — the "knowledge" that means salvation. For ordinary human nature, there is needed a process of education, of discipline, which shall lead up to this enlightenment. Various sects make use of morality in this way, as a preliminary help. It purifies the soul and prepares it for enlightenment. Many Upaniṣad passages imply such a position, at least by saying that the wicked cannot hope for true knowledge — even tho other passages speak of knowledge as a sort of magic power by which one "sloughs off sin, as a snake sloughs off its skin."<sup>26</sup>

There are other preliminary steps or practices which various sects regard as useful in preparing the soul for the reception of the enlightenment which will finally bring release. And in some of the later Hindu sects these preliminary steps become so prominent that they obscure, or almost obliterate, what was originally the true goal — the attainment of metaphysical knowledge. Of these avenues of approach to knowledge, which however occasionally lead off into seductive bypaths, the chief, in addition to righteous conduct, are two. One is devotion to the personality of some god or prophet, who is regarded as a kind of personal savior or helper on the way to salvation. The other is the practice of asceticism in some form or other, regarded as an approach to a state of inaction (and so to the ideal, since all actions lead to rebirth), and also as helping to prepare for enlightenment by freeing the individual from attachment to the world, by gradually conquering the natural desires of the flesh.

The first of these two secondary methods, as we may call them, plays a very small rôle in the older Upaniṣads. The Upaniṣads recognize no prophet who could occupy the place which the Buddha holds for his followers as a personal Savior, quite analogous to the places of Jesus and Mohammed in Christianity and Islam. And most of them, particularly the earliest, do not speak of the One — Brahman, or Ātman, or the Existent, or whatever they call It — in sufficiently personal terms to make it easy to treat It as exercising grace in saving men, or as the object of any very personal devotion on the part of men. But for the Bhagavad Gītā, which is frankly monotheistic,<sup>27</sup> the case is very different; and we shall find that in it the "grace of God" is repeatedly spoken of as singling out His elect and bringing them to salvation by His divine choice. And no means for attaining salvation is more emphasized in the Gītā than *bhakti*, "devotion" to God, or fervent love of Him. Originally, no doubt, this devotion was to lead to knowledge, intellectual enlightenment, and so to release. But the intermediate step is often

<sup>26</sup> Praśna Upaniṣad, 5.5.

<sup>27</sup> This is certainly a reasonable statement in dealing with a work in which the principal speaker is represented as an incarnation of the Supreme Deity; altho there are not wanting in the Gītā, as we shall see in Chapter VI, passages in which the First Principle seems to be spoken of in impersonal, monistic terms.



lost sight of in the Gītā and in similar later works; they not infrequently speak of ecstatic love of God as leading immediately to absorption in Him, which is their conception of salvation. It is interesting to note, then, that even this position, contrary tho it is to the usual spirit of the Upaniṣads, finds expression in them, and precisely in two of them which were pretty certainly known to the author of the Gītā. One speaks of enlightenment as coming "by the grace of God," and recommends "devotion" (*bhakti*) to Him as a means for attaining it.<sup>28</sup> The other speaks of "beholding the greatness of the Soul (*ātman*) by the grace of the Creator (*dhātār*)," <sup>29</sup> and shortly after this the same text, not even using the term "Creator" or "God," or any other personal expression for the Supreme, says that "this Soul (*ātman*; here the Universal Soul) is not to be attained by instruction, by intellect, or by much holy learning; He is to be attained only by him whom He chooses; for him He reveals His own form." <sup>30</sup>

The other "secondary method" of gaining enlightenment, the method of withdrawal from the world by some form of asceticism, is more complicated in its history. In the oldest periods of Vedic speculation we hear much of what is called *tapas*. Already in the great monistic hymn of the Rīg Veda, 10.129, the One is produced out of the primal chaos by the power of *tapas*. The word means literally "heat," and in cosmogonic connections it undoubtedly suggests the creative warmth that is symbolized by the brooding of a bird over its eggs. Belief in the development of the universe out of a cosmic egg appears not infrequently in early Hindu cosmogonies, and with it is clearly associated belief in *tapas*, warmth, as a force of cosmic evolution. But in religious language the same word had the figurative meaning of "religious, devotional fervor." It is the inspiration of the priest or holy man. It was thus nearly related to the notion of *brahman*, the holy word as the quintessence of religious spirit. It is possible that it had a partly physical connotation in this sense, too; the religious fervor probably was sometimes brought on or increased by physical exertion; and even the sacrificial ritual itself, being performed over the sacred fire, resulted in literal, physical "heat" for the officiating priests (the texts refer to this specifically). For these various reasons the power of *tapas*, "warmth" or "fervor," is prominently mentioned in early Vedic cosmogonies as a cosmic force. Sometimes it is made a sort of First Principle itself. More often the Creator is spoken of as "exercising *tapas*" in creating the universe.

But about the time of the early Upaniṣads the word *tapas* began to acquire a new connotation. From this period seems to date the development in

<sup>28</sup> Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad, 6.21, 23. This is a comparatively late Upaniṣad, probably not much older than the Gītā; there are various good reasons for believing that it was known to the Gītā's author.

<sup>29</sup> Kāṭha Upaniṣad, 2.20. The Gītā has several verbal quotations from this Upaniṣad.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.23.

India of a recognized class of hermits or monks, men who renounced the world and lived a life devoted to meditation or some form of asceticism. The prominence of such people in later India is well known. They do not appear clearly in the early Vedic texts; and their appearance in large numbers is certainly related to the growth of world-weariness among the Hindu intellectuals, which accompanied and signalized the general views of life outlined in this chapter. If all ordinary life is vanity and vexation of spirit, and the only hope of salvation lies in knowledge of the Soul, which is to be attained thru mystic contemplation, naturally the intelligent man will be inclined to turn his back on the world and devote himself to a more or less hermit-like existence. There are, moreover, very special reasons for asceticism. Actions lead to rebirth; so inaction, or the nearest possible approach to it, withdrawal from the world, is desirable. Furthermore, as we have seen, desires are the root of evil, because they enchain man to the things of this life, and distract his attention from his true goal. He must, therefore, seek to overcome his desires. One way of doing this is to avoid the objects of desire as much as possible, by living a solitary life, preferably in the wilderness. Another way is by positive acts of self-repression, even self-torture, to "mortify the flesh" and reduce it to subjection. Another is by means of self-hypnosis to induce a state of trance, or half-trance, in which one may attain nearly complete, if only temporary, freedom from the distractions of the world, and a sort of approach to the "unconscious consciousness" of union with the One. All of these varying forms of ascetic austerities have been more or less practised by many Hindu sects, sometimes in very extreme forms. They are all suggested by the expression *tapas*, "heat, fervor," as it is used in the Upaniṣads and later. As so used the word contains both a physical and a "spiritual" connotation. Physical, in that many ascetics engaged in often very strenuous exertions, or deliberately subjected themselves to the heat of the sun and of fire, to subdue their physical passions. "Spiritual," in that their theoretical aim, at least, was always to produce the desired religious fervor or ecstasy thru which they hoped to gain enlightenment. In theory, all such practices were only a means, the end being enlightenment. They prepared the soul for this end by subduing desires and inducing a spiritual attitude favorable to the reception of enlightenment. But in this case, too, as in the case of the theory of divine grace and devotion to the Deity, the means became the end in some later sects, which came to think of salvation as resulting directly from asceticism, not from enlightenment brought on by asceticism. There are sects which teach that salvation is sure to come to one who starves himself to death — the *ne plus ultra* of ascetic practice. This extreme, however, is exceptional.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>31</sup> In popular belief ascetic practices came to be regarded as a means of acquiring all sorts of supernatural or magic powers; just as knowledge (the acquisition of which

We see, then, that the word *tapas*, "fervor," had both a physical and a "spiritual" aspect in both the early Vedic speculations and their later successors, but that there was a change in the connotation on each side. The Upaniṣads took up the early word for "fervor" or "warmth" and reinterpreted it in terms of their own views. Common to both periods is the use of the primarily physical term to characterize a certain type of religious life, tho a different type in each period. The early use of the term in cosmogonic connections may also be presumed to have contributed to the use of it in the Upaniṣads as a tentative definition of the First Principle, or a means of knowing it. ("Seek to know the *brahman* by fervor [austerity, *tapas*]; *brahman* is fervor [austerity]!")<sup>32</sup> Not a few Upaniṣad passages speak of attaining the *ātman* thru *tapas*, either alone or in conjunction with other potencies. For them, however, it remains a subordinate matter, on the whole. The sentence just quoted is not at all typical of their general attitude. In this respect the Bhagavad Gītā agrees with them. Indeed, the usual attitude of the Gītā is definitely opposed to asceticism; it seeks to justify participation in normal, worldly life, tho with qualification. Only rarely does it speak in terms which seem to recommend withdrawal from the world.<sup>33</sup>

To summarize this chapter: the Upaniṣads show us the beginnings of the fundamental principles of later, classical Hinduism. These may be grouped under three general headings. First, pessimism: all ordinary life is evil. Second, transmigration, with the doctrine of karma: living souls are subject to an indefinite series of lives, all more or less like this life, the condition of the individual in each being determined by his moral conduct in previous existences. Third, salvation: the only hope for release from this endless chain of evil existences is (primarily) by "knowledge," that is, intuitive realization of the supreme metaphysical truth; as preparations or aids to the attainment of this knowledge are recognized morality, devotion to a supreme personality, and ascetic austerities, altho all of these are usually kept in a quite subordinate position in the Upaniṣads. In various later sects one or another of them at times assumes such importance as to obscure the original means of salvation, "knowledge." Except in this last respect, virtually all Hindu sects and philosophies agree regarding these basic postulates, however much they may differ on other matters.

was the theoretical object of ascetic practices) was understood by the vulgar in terms of magic power. Some of the later systems of philosophy which attach great importance to austerities are not free from this degradation of the principle.

<sup>32</sup> Taittiriya Upaniṣad, 3.2 ff.

<sup>33</sup> See Chapter VII.

## CHAPTER IV

### PREHISTORY OF THE GOD OF THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

It could hardly be expected that the popular interest would be gripped by Upaniṣadic thought. It was too speculative, too abstract, to appeal to any but a small proportion of the population. The great mass of mankind demanded, as always, a personal, quasi-human god or gods to worship; it could not be satisfied by mystic contemplation of a nameless Soul, even if it be the Soul of the universe. Some more acceptable outlet for the religious feeling of the people had to be provided; and there is good reason to believe that it was provided. Unfortunately, the evidence about it is mostly indirect and secondary. We can judge of it, for the most part, only from its traces in such later works as the Bhagavad Gītā, which clearly presuppose a considerable development of popular religion, distinct from the higher thought of the Upaniṣads but contemporary therewith. In the Gītā these two streams are blended. We have no records that show us the popular beliefs of that period in a pure form.

For this reason, it is scarcely possible to attempt any extensive reconstruction of those popular beliefs. The principal thing to be said about them is that they were certainly theistic, and presumably tended towards a monotheism, of a more or less qualified sort. That is, presumably various local or tribal deities were worshipped in different parts of India, each occupying a position somewhat similar to that of Yahweh among the Jews — each being regarded as the chief or perhaps the sole god of his people or tribe, tho the existence of the gods of other tribes was not denied. These local deities were, we may assume, of very different types and origins. Sometimes they may have been old gods of aboriginal, non-Aryan tribes. Sometimes they seem to have been local heroes, deified after death.

Such a local deity must have been the Kṛṣṇa who appears as the Supreme Deity, the “Blessed One,” in the Bhagavad Gītā. He was apparently a deified local chieftain, the head of the Vṛṣṇi clan. Indeed, he appears as such, in strictly human guise, in the greater part of the Mahābhārata. In the Gītā he is still both god and man; an incarnation of the Deity in human form. We know nothing of the process by which he attained divine honors, nor of his earlier history as a god, before the Bhagavad Gītā, which is probably the earliest work preserved to us in which he appears as such. In this work he has all the attributes of a full-fledged monotheistic deity, and at the same time, as we shall see, the attributes of the Upaniṣadic Absolute. In other

words, the popular God is philosophized into a figure who can appeal to both the higher and the lower circles of the population. Therein lies the strength of Kṛṣṇaism in later India; it is many-sided enough to satisfy the religious requirements of almost any man, whatever his intellectual or social status may be.

The Upaniṣads themselves are not entirely free from quasi-monotheistic touches, some of which may perhaps be interpreted as concessions to this same popular demand for a personal god. Especially interesting, and important for later Hinduism, is the personalization of the philosophic term Brahman, as a name for the Absolute, which appears even in some of the earliest Upaniṣads. The word *brahman* is primarily and originally neuter in gender, and remains so usually thruout the Upaniṣads and the Bhagavad Gītā; but occasionally it acquires a personality, as a sort of creating and ruling deity, and then it has masculine gender. It thus becomes the god Brahmā, familiar to later Hinduism as the nominal head of the Triad consisting of Brahmā the Creator, Viṣṇu the Preserver, and Śiva the Destroyer. This trinity appears only in comparatively late Upaniṣads, and no clear mention of it is found in the Bhagavad Gītā, altho the Gītā at least once refers to the masculine and personal Brahmā, "the Lord sitting on the lotus-seat."<sup>1</sup> But this grammatical trick was not sufficient to satisfy the craving of the men of India. Even masculinized, Brahman-Brahmā remained too bloodless to attract many worshipers. Later Hinduism pays lip-homage to him, but reserves its real worship for his colleagues, Viṣṇu and Śiva.

Viṣṇu and Śiva, under various names and forms, are the real gods of later India. Śiva-worship, tho certainly much older than the Bhagavad Gītā, hardly appears therein,<sup>2</sup> and may therefore be left out of consideration in this book. But we must say a few words about Viṣṇu, since he was identified with Kṛṣṇa, the Gītā's God, or regarded as incarnate in Him. This identification seems to me to appear clearly in the Gītā itself.<sup>3</sup>

Viṣṇu was one of the gods of the Rig Veda, and probably, like most of them, a nature-god. He seems to have been a personification of the sun. But the Rig Veda contains a number of sun-gods (perhaps originally belonging to different tribes, or else representing different aspects of the sun's power). Viṣṇu is one of the less prominent and less important ones. He is distinctly a minor figure in the Rig Veda. We hear that he measures the universe in three great strides, which refer figuratively to the sun's progress

<sup>1</sup> xi. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Śiva, under various of his innumerable names, is however mentioned (e.g. x. 23).

<sup>3</sup> A distinguished Hindu scholar, the late Sir R. G. Bhandarkar, thought that Kṛṣṇa was not yet identified with Viṣṇu in the Gītā, tho he was soon afterwards. See his *Vaiṣṇavism, Saivism and Minor Religious Systems*, page 13. But Kṛṣṇa is directly addressed as Viṣṇu in xi. 24 and 30; and I do not believe that Viṣṇu can here mean "the sun."

across the sky. The third stride lands him in "the highest foot-step (or, place; the word has both meanings) of Viṣṇu," which means the zenith. This is thought of as the highest point in the universe, and at times it is described as a kind of solar paradise, to which the spirits of the blessed dead may go. So in post-Rig-Vedic literature, we hear expressions of the desire for attaining "Viṣṇu's highest place." So, also, in this period, Viṣṇu is occasionally declared to be "the highest of the gods"; this is doubtless to be understood in a literal, physical sense, because Viṣṇu's abode is the "top of the world." In the same period, we find very frequently the statement that "Viṣṇu is the sacrifice." Why he should have been singled out for this honor, we cannot tell; there are other gods whose far greater prominence would seem to us to give them a better claim to be regarded as a personification of the ritual. But the frequency of the statement leaves no room for doubt that the priests of the "Middle Vedic" (Brāhmaṇa) period generally regarded Viṣṇu in this way. And since, as we have seen, to them the "sacrifice" was the central power of the universe, we see that from their point of view no higher compliment was possible. Evidently Viṣṇu was acquiring a much more dignified position than he had in the Rig Veda.

The Upaniṣads add nothing to the history of Viṣṇu. They — that is, the older ones, those which antedate the Gītā — mention his name only three or four times, and quite in the style of the Middle-Vedic period. But suddenly, in the Gītā and other contemporary writings, we find Viṣṇu recognized as a supreme monotheistic deity, worshiped either under his own name, or in the form of various incarnations, the chief of which is Kṛṣṇa. This was at a time when the Vedic religion, as a whole, was nearly dead. Its gods no longer had a real hold on any class of the people. Their existence was not denied, but they were reduced to the rank of petty spirits. Even the once all-important sacrifices were largely falling into disuse. But if the ritual religion was perishing, the priestly class was not. By this time it was recognized as a definite and hereditary caste, the brahmanhood, which claimed the headship of human society. With this fact, probably, is to be connected the identification of the god or hero Kṛṣṇa, and other popular gods and heroes, with the old Vedic god Viṣṇu. Thus a sacerdotal tinge was given to the thriving monotheism which had such a hold on the mass of the people. Brahmanism stooped to conquer; it absorbed popular cults which it had not the strength to uproot. The simple and ancient device of identification of one god with another furnished the means to this end.

It remains something of a mystery to scholars why Viṣṇu, rather than some other Vedic deity, was selected for this purpose. Even after the development described in the last paragraph but one, Viṣṇu is by no means the most prominent god of the pantheon. Many steps in the long process have evidently disappeared from our sight. But probably his frequent

identification with the sacrifice, and his growing eschatological importance as the ruler of a kind of paradise for the dead in his "highest place," have something to do with it.

We have, then, finally, a union of at least three strands in the monotheistic deity of the Bhagavad Gītā: a popular god-hero of a local tribe, an ancient Vedic deity belonging to the hieratic ritual religion, and the philosophic Absolute of the Upaniṣads. The blend is, as we shall see, by no means perfect. Especially the monistic, Upaniṣadic element is sometimes rather clearly distinguished from the theistic element or elements; the author of the Gītā himself underlines this distinction at times.<sup>4</sup> But for the most part it is hard to disentangle one from the other.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter VI, p. 48.





**SECOND PART**  
**THE TEACHINGS OF THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ**



## CHAPTER V

### SOUL AND BODY

WE SAW that the Upaniṣads center their attention on a search for the central, fundamental, and animating principle of the universe, and of man; that these two objects of speculation are regarded in them as parallel, the universal macrocosm being compared to the human microcosm; and that this parallelism indeed turns into an identity, which results in an equation between the "soul" or real self of man and that of the universe. So frequent and striking are such expressions in the Upaniṣads that this is often, tho I think not without exaggeration, regarded as the prime motif of Upaniṣadic thought. It is "knowledge" of this mystic truth which makes man omnipotent, makes him master of the universe, and so "free"; free, that is, from the limitations and annoyances of finite life.

In spite of the fact that the Bhagavad Gītā is saturated with the atmosphere of the Upaniṣads, this doctrine of theirs is not exactly prominent in it. It is not unknown to it; several passages in which it speaks of the human soul come very close to that view.<sup>1</sup> It would indeed be strange if it had avoided it altogether. It is curious enough that it has so nearly suppressed it, in view of its obvious debt to Upaniṣadic thought. The chief reason for the suppression probably lay in the fact that this monistic view was not easy to reconcile with the ardent, devotional theism of the Gītā. Even tho, as we shall see, the Gītā regards God as immanent in all beings, and its author hopes for ultimate union with Him, still he seems to shrink from the bold assertion "I am God," which requires more courage than the Upaniṣadic "I am Brahman," simply because Brahman is impersonal and the Gītā's God is definitely personal. Union with God is projected into the future, and is not put on a basis of equality between the soul and God.<sup>2</sup> Once the Gītā speaks of the human soul as a *part* of God.<sup>3</sup> Generally God is a personality distinct from the human soul, and superior to it.

<sup>1</sup> ii. 17: "But know thou that That One (the human soul is referred to) by which all this universe is pervaded is indestructible. Of this imperishable one no one can cause the destruction." — ii. 24: "Eternal, omnipresent, fixed, immovable, everlasting is He (the human soul)." — xiii. 27: "Abiding alike in all beings, the supreme Lord (the human soul), not perishing when they (the beings) perish, — who sees him, he (truly) sees."

<sup>2</sup> Some of the Christian mystics seem more courageous. Compare Angelus Silesius's

"Ich bin so gross wie Gott,  
Er ist wie ich so klein."

<sup>3</sup> xv. 7: "A part just of Me, becoming the eternal soul in living beings," etc.

The Upaniṣadic notion of the human soul is, however, clearly retained in the Gītā as far as concerns its individual nature. It is still the essential part of man, that which does not perish at death. Indeed, the dignity and importance of the soul is brought out if possible even more strongly than is usual in the Upaniṣads, in one respect; namely, in the contrast that is emphasized between the soul and what is not soul. This contrast is rather a minor matter in most of the Upaniṣads. They are so charmed by the contemplation of the soul, which they find in everything, that they virtually ignore the existence of everything that is not soul,<sup>4</sup> or else brush it aside with the summary remark that "whatever is other than that (the soul) is evil."<sup>5</sup> At any rate, most of them are not enough interested in the non-soul to speculate much about its nature. The Gītā, on the other hand, has definite theories about the structure of the non-soul or body, — largely inherited, to be sure, from older times, and to some extent hinted at in certain of the Upaniṣads. These are used to contrast the body with the soul; and the comparison, of course, is much to the advantage of the soul. Thus in the opening part of the dialog, Kṛṣṇa instructs Arjuna that he should not grieve for the soul, because it is immortal, and inaccessible to the sufferings which afflict the body. "It is declared that these bodies come to an end; but the Embodied (Soul) in them is eternal, indestructible, unfathomable."<sup>6</sup> "He (the soul) is not born, nor does he ever die; nor, once being, shall he evermore cease to be. Unborn, eternal, everlasting from oldest times, he is not slain when the body is slain."<sup>7</sup>

We find, in fact, that the Gītā's most usual and characteristic position is definitely dualistic. There are two eternal principles, eternally distinct from each other: "soul" (usually called *puruṣa*, "man, person, spirit"; sometimes *ātman*, "self"; other synonyms also occur), and what may perhaps be called "non-soul" rather than "body," since, as we shall see presently, it includes what are among us commonly regarded as "mental" faculties; the usual Hindu term is *prakṛti*, "nature, material nature, matter." The soul is absolutely unitary, undifferentiated, and without qualities; not

<sup>4</sup> Some scholars say that they even *deny* the real existence of anything other than the soul, as certain schools of the later Vedānta philosophy do. I do not agree with this view.

<sup>5</sup> Bṛhad Āraṇyaka Upaniṣad, 3.4.2.

<sup>6</sup> ii. 18.

<sup>7</sup> ii. 20. Compare also ii. 11, 25, 30. It is painful to have to add that this doctrine is here applied to a justification of war, and of killing in general; since the soul cannot be killed, and the body does not matter (and since, moreover, it must die in any case, ii. 26, 27), "therefore fight," says Kṛṣṇa (ii. 18). A charitable explanation would be that this is a concession to the dramatic situation of the poem, as inserted in the Mahābhārata; and this could be supported by various texts in the Gītā which are distinctly hostile to violence. But we shall see that there are other ethical, as well as metaphysical, inconsistencies in the Gītā. See Chapter XI.

subject to any change or alteration, and not participating in any action. Material nature, or the non-soul, is what performs all acts. It assumes manifold forms, and is constantly subject to change — evolution, devolution, and variation.

The variety of material nature is expressed in two ways. First, it is composed of three elements called *guṇas*, that is, "threads, strands," or "qualities":<sup>8</sup> namely, *satva*, "goodness, purity"; *rajas*, "passion, activity"; and *tamas*, "darkness, dullness, inactivity." Mingled in varying proportions, these three "strands" or qualities make up all matter. Preponderance of one or another of them determines the character of any given part of material nature.<sup>9</sup> But material nature includes what with us are often called the "mental" faculties of living beings, particularly of man. This is made clear in one passage in the *Gītā*,<sup>10</sup> where we find a second and much more elaborate statement of the constituents of material nature — or rather, this time, of its evolvents; for, tho this is not clearly stated here, it is obvious that we are dealing with an evolutionary theory which is very familiar in contemporary and later Hindu philosophy. According to this, out of the primal, undifferentiated "matter" develops first the faculty of consciousness or will (the term, *buddhi*, approximately covers both of these English terms); then the "I-faculty," the organ of self-consciousness (*ahamkāra*); then the thought-organ (*manas*, sometimes etymologically translated "mind"), which mediates between sense-perception and the self-consciousness, and is regarded as the function of a special, "inner" sense-organ; with it the faculties of the ten sense-organs,<sup>11</sup> five intellectual (of sight, smell, hearing, taste and feeling) and five organs of action (of speech [function of the speech-organs], grasping [of the hands], locomotion [of the feet], evacua-

<sup>8</sup> The word is probably both concrete and abstract in the *Gītā*; the *guṇas* are both material "constituent elements," like strands of a rope, and qualifying characteristics. No clear distinction was made at this time between these two things (cf. Oldenberg, *Upanishaden und Buddhismus*, 1st ed., p. 217 f.; 2d ed., p. 188 f.). The later Sāṃkhya philosophy insists that the *guṇas* are physical, constituent parts of matter, not what we call qualities. And this certainly fits the primary and literal meaning of the word *guṇa*, "strand (of a rope)." Yet its figurative meaning of "quality" is also very familiar in the *Gītā*'s time.

<sup>9</sup> The results of the preponderance of each of the three "strands" in various parts of *prakṛti* are set forth in some detail in the *Gītā*, xiv. 5-18, and the whole of chapter xvii. Generally speaking, the theory is that the best and highest forms of matter or nature are those in which *satva*, "goodness, purity," predominates; in the worst and lowest forms *tamas*, "darkness, dullness," predominates; the predominance of *rajas*, "activity" or "passion," is found in a large variety of forms whose ethical values are mostly intermediate or indeterminate.

<sup>10</sup> xiii. 5, 6.

<sup>11</sup> The *Gītā* seems to include both the physical organs and their functions in the same verbal expressions. I shall not here discuss the later Hindu usage.

tion, and generation); also the five "subtle elements," the abstract essences of the material objects (or as we say, reversing the direction, stimulants) of the five senses (sound, as the object of hearing, etc.); and finally the five gross elements, earth, air, fire, water, and ether.<sup>13</sup> All of these forms of material nature — twenty-four in all, including the "undifferentiated" form — are alike composed of the three above-mentioned "strands" (*guṇas*), in varying proportions. It will be seen that the two classifications are not inconsistent, but cross one another, the one being, so to speak, vertical, the other horizontal.

It is, as I have said, only "material nature" or "matter" that acts. "Actions are performed entirely by the strands (*guṇas*) of material nature. He whose soul is deluded by the I-faculty imagines that he is the doer." <sup>13</sup> That is, owing to the confusion created by the activity of the organ of self-consciousness — *which is part of matter, not of the soul* — one imagines that "he" himself (his soul, his real self, or *ātman*) performs actions. "But he who knows the truth of the separation (of the soul, on the one hand, from both) the strands (of matter) and action (on the other), knowing that (in any action) it is (not the soul that acts but) the strands of matter that act upon the strands, is not enthralled." <sup>14</sup> "And who sees that acts are exclusively performed by material nature alone, and likewise that his soul does nothing, he (truly) sees." <sup>15</sup> "The disciplined man who knows the truth shall think: 'I am not doing anything at all,' whether he be seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, walking, sleeping, breathing, speaking, evacuating, grasping, opening or closing his eyes; he holds fast to the thought that it is the (material) senses that are operating on the objects of sense." <sup>16</sup> "When the Beholder (the soul) perceives that no other than the strands (of matter) acts and knows that which is above the strands, he goes unto My estate." <sup>17</sup>

What, then, is the function of the soul? As the passage last quoted indicates, it "beholds" the activities of matter, passively, and without participation. "Passively" in the sense that it has no relation to those activities at all; not in the sense that it is affected by them, for its true, fundamental nature is just as free from the effects of action as from its performance. "The Lord (the soul) does not receive (i.e., reap the fruit of)

<sup>13</sup> I shall refrain from describing the precise stages of this evolutionary process as set forth in the later Sāṃkhya philosophy. It is not clear to what extent they had been formulated in the time of the Gītā. One verse of the Gītā (iii. 42) lists a few of these "evolvents" in climactic order, but without asserting any genetic relationship, — in fact, perhaps implying rather that none exists, since the "highest" member of the series is there the Soul, which is elsewhere clearly stated to be unrelated to matter.

<sup>13</sup> iii. 27.

<sup>14</sup> iii. 28.

<sup>15</sup> xiii. 29.

<sup>16</sup> v. 8, 9.

<sup>17</sup> xiv. 19.

any one's sin, nor yet (of) his good deeds." <sup>18</sup> "Swords cut him not, fire burns him not, water wets him not, wind dries him not. He cannot be cut, he cannot be burnt, he cannot be wet, nor yet dried. Eternal, omnipresent, fixed, immovable, everlasting is he (the human soul)." <sup>19</sup> Elsewhere the soul is called the "knower" of matter: "This body is called the Field. He who knows it (i.e., the soul), him those who know the truth call the Field-knower." <sup>20</sup> The soul, then, merely looks on and "knows" matter and its acts, but has no real connection with them.

And yet, inconsistently as it seems at first sight, the soul is spoken of as experiencing pleasure and pain, which result from material contacts and processes. "Know that both material nature and the soul are eternal; know that both the modifications (or 'evolvents,' viz. will, I-faculty, organ of thought and other sense-organs, and subtle and gross elements) and the strands (*gunas*) spring from material nature. Material nature is declared to be the cause of effects, instrumentality, and agency; the soul is declared to be the cause of enjoyment (i.e., experiencing) of pleasure and pain. For the soul, residing in material nature, enjoys the strands (*gunas*) that are born of material nature. Its attachment to the strands is the reason for its various births in good and evil stations." <sup>21</sup> The key to the seeming inconsistency (which is really due to a certain laxity or inaccuracy in the passage just quoted) is indicated in the last sentence, the thought of which is more fully expressed in another passage, where it is said that the soul "draws (to itself) the (five) senses, with the organ of thought as the sixth, which rest in material nature. . . . Making use of hearing, sight, touch, taste, and smell, and the organ of thought (all of which are really material), it pursues the objects of sense. Fools do not perceive that it (the soul) is attended by the strands (*gunas*, of matter) when it is passing out or remaining fixed (in the body) or enjoying (experiencing, viz. the objects of sense). Those whose eye is knowledge see this." <sup>22</sup> It is only because the soul is associated with matter that it "enjoys," or rather (it would be more accurate to say) *seems* to "enjoy," material processes. "Those who are deluded by the strands (*gunas*) of material nature are enthralled in the actions of the strands." <sup>23</sup> In other words, it is, strictly speaking, not the soul that "enjoys" — experiences — anything. That it seems to do so is due to the confusion caused by the organ of self-consciousness, the "I-faculty," which is a product of material nature and really quite disconnected with the soul, and from which in turn spring all the sense-organs and their objects. Were it not for this, the soul would perceive that it has no relation whatever to the activities and sufferings of matter. Since to the *Gitā* the general Hindu

<sup>18</sup> v. 15.

<sup>19</sup> ii. 23, 24

<sup>20</sup> xiii. 1.

<sup>21</sup> xiii. 19-21.

<sup>22</sup> xv. 7-10.

<sup>23</sup> iii. 29.

pessimistic view of life is axiomatic, it follows that this "enjoyment" is in reality naught but evil and suffering, and that the association of the soul with matter is a bondage. "Goodness (*sattva*), activity (passion, *rajas*) and darkness (*tamas*), — these strands, springing from material nature, bind in the body the immortal soul."<sup>24</sup> It is only the unenlightened man whom they *can* bind. When one attains true enlightenment, that is, realization of the true nature of the soul and matter and their fundamental independence of each other, then, by virtue of this perfect, mystic knowledge, he obtains release; his soul transcends matter and is freed from it for good and all, and he is freed from the chain of rebirths. "Who thus understands the soul and material nature together with the strands (of the latter), — in whatever state he may be, he is not (to be) born again."<sup>25</sup> "The Embodied (Soul), transcending these three strands (of matter) that spring from the body, freed from birth, death, old age, and sorrow, attains immortality (here a poetic expression for *nirvāṇa*)."<sup>26</sup> "Mentally abandoning all actions (that is, taking no interest in any action which the body may perform), the Embodied (Soul) sits at peace, in control, in his nine-doored citadel (the body), and neither acts nor causes action at all."<sup>27</sup>

Note that this is a distinctly anthropomorphic dualism. As we have already seen, it is characteristic of Hindu speculation that it thinks of the whole universe in human terms; this was particularly true of the Upaniṣads, and remains true, generally speaking, of all later systems. This attitude assumes various forms. The Gītā says: "All creatures whatsoever, motionless (inanimate objects and plants) or moving (animals), are produced by the union of the Field (material nature) and the Field-knower (the soul)."<sup>28</sup> This seems to attribute to all nature not only "mental" faculties, will, self-consciousness, and thinking organ, which are parts of material nature and its primary evolvents, but also a soul that is distinct from material nature. Some Hindu sects — particularly the Jains — clearly and definitely accept the extreme implications of this theory, and believe that even inanimate objects are inhabited by souls, which are subject to transmigration like animal souls. Other Hindu systems do not carry it as far as that, at least in definite statements. But to all of them man is the only part of the universe that really counts. Animals (usually plants also) are to them potential humans; and the rest of the world they virtually ignore in their speculations. We need not consider here the extreme idealistic monism of Śaṅkara's Vedānta

<sup>24</sup> xiv. 5.

<sup>25</sup> xiii. 23.

<sup>26</sup> xiv. 20.

<sup>27</sup> v. 13. We shall have more to say of the various means of salvation found in the Gītā in Chapters VIII and IX.

<sup>28</sup> xiii. 26



philosophy, according to which there is only One that truly exists, namely Brahman, the world soul, with which the human soul is really identical; all else is illusion (*māyā*); existing only in appearance, as a mirage, and not in reality. This system developed long after the *Gītā*, as it seems to me, altho it claims to be founded on the Upaniṣads. In a sense it is founded on them; it is only the logical conclusion, or extreme application, of their doctrine that the essential part of man is one with the essential part of the universe. But the Upaniṣads did not say "the non-soul does not exist." They only tended to ignore its existence or its importance — to wave it aside as unworthy of their consideration; they were not interested in it. This explains why the Upaniṣads could be made the basis for such diametrically opposite systems as the monism of Śaṅkara's Vedānta on the one hand and the *Gītā*'s dualism on the other. The latter was reduced to more systematic forms by the later Sāṃkhya and Yoga philosophies, both of which recognize the reality and independence of soul and matter. They differ on the existence of God, which is accepted by the Yoga but denied by the Sāṃkhya.<sup>29</sup> The *Gītā* agrees with the Yoga in this respect. All of these views derive from the Upaniṣadic speculations centering about the human soul; and all agree that the non-soul, or material nature, is something from which the soul should utterly detach itself, whether it really exists (*Citā*, Sāṃkhya, and Yoga) or is merely illusory (Śaṅkara's Vedānta).

<sup>29</sup> Or rather by certain representatives of the later Sāṃkhya, which have been, a little hastily, taken as typical of the whole school. As a matter of fact, a theistic Sāṃkhya has probably always existed, and was certainly known late as well as early.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE NATURE OF GOD

WE HAVE spoken of the metaphysics of the Gītā as dualistic, as recognizing two fundamental principles, the soul and the non-soul (body, or material nature). But it is impossible to read far in the Gītā without finding that this description does not fully represent its author's metaphysics, at least in his most typical mood. It leaves out of account his idea of God, which is as it were superimposed upon the dualistic system outlined in the last chapter.

How does God fit into this system? Is He a sort of third principle, higher than the other two and distinct from them? So we are told at times, perhaps most clearly in the following passage: "There are two spirits<sup>1</sup> here in the world, a perishable and an imperishable one. The perishable (i.e., material nature) is all beings. The imperishable (i.e., the soul, spirit) is called the immovable (unchangeable). But there is another, a supreme Spirit, called the Highest Soul (Paramātman), the Eternal Lord who enters into the three worlds and supports them."<sup>2</sup> Here the Supreme Soul, God, is definitely set off against the individual soul and matter, as a third principle. Somewhat similarly in another passage, we first have a statement of the ordinary dualism: "This body is called the Field; him who knows it (the soul) those who know the truth call the Field-knower" — which is immediately followed by this: "Know that I (God) am the Field-knower in all Fields."<sup>3</sup>

But even in these very passages let it be noted that God, tho in a sense something other than either material nature or the individual souls of men, is at the same time regarded as immanent in them. "Whoso sees Me in all and all in Me, for him I am not lost, and he is not lost for Me. Whoso, attaining to (belief in) oneness, reveres Me as located in all beings, he, the disciplined, tho he may abide in any possible state, abides in Me."<sup>4</sup> "Attaining to (belief in) *oneness*!" Thus thru its God the Gītā seems after all

<sup>1</sup> The word used is *puruṣa*, literally "man," which elsewhere means strictly "soul" and is not applied to the body or material nature; yet here the "perishable spirit" can obviously mean nothing but *prakṛti*, material nature. This is an example of the loose language of the Gītā which often reminds us that we are reading a mystic poem, not a logical treatise on metaphysics.

<sup>2</sup> xv. 16, 17.

<sup>3</sup> xiii. 1, 2.

<sup>4</sup> vi. 30, 31.

to arrive at an ultimate monism. The essential part, the fundamental element, in every thing, is after all One — is God. "There is nothing else that is higher than I (beyond, outside of Me); on Me this All is strung like necklaces of pearls on a string."<sup>5</sup> "Also the seed of all beings, that am I. There is no being, moving or motionless, that is without Me."<sup>6</sup> "I am taste in water, the light in the moon and sun, the sacred syllable Om in all the Vedas, sound in the ether, manliness in men. The goodly odor in the earth am I, and brilliance in the fire; I am life in all beings, and austerity in ascetics. Know Me as the eternal seed of all creatures. I am the intelligence of the intelligent, the majesty of the majestic."<sup>7</sup> God is the animating principle in everything; it is He that "makes the wheels" of the universe "go 'round," that acts in all natural activities and processes: "The Lord abides in the heart of all beings and makes all beings go around by His mysterious power (*māyā*), as if they were fixed on a (revolving) machine (that is, probably, like puppets in a puppet-play)."<sup>8</sup> "The splendor of the sun that illumines the whole world and the splendor that is in the moon and in fire, know that to be My splendor. Entering into the earth I support (all) beings by My power; becoming the juicy soma I make all plants to grow. Becoming fire (as the principle of digestion, regarded by the Hindus as a 'cooking' by bodily heat) I enter into the bodies of animate creatures, and, joining with the upper and nether breaths, I digest their food of all four sorts. I have entered into the heart of every man; from Me come memory, knowledge, and disputation (in reasoning). I alone am the object of the (sacred) knowledge of all the Vedas; I am the author of the Vedānta (the Upaniṣads, the summation of the esoteric doctrines of the Vedas), and I too am the sole knower of the Veda."<sup>9</sup> So, of course, God is repeatedly declared to be the Creator, Supporter, Ruler of all that is; the origin and dissolution of the universe,<sup>10</sup> "both death that carries off all and the origin of creatures that are to be,"<sup>11</sup> "both immortality and death, both the existent and the non-existent,"<sup>12</sup> "the beginning and the middle and the end of beings."<sup>13</sup>

Such words lead to the question of the existence of evil and how to reconcile it with the belief in an all-embracing God. Every theistic religion has its difficulties with the problem of evil. In describing the manifestations of God in the universe, the Gītā, quite naturally, tends to emphasize the good side of things; but at times it does not shrink from including the evil also. Since *all* comes from God, it seems impossible to deny that origin to anything. "Whatsoever states of being there are, be they of the nature of goodness, passion, or darkness (the three *guṇas* or strands of matter, as set forth in the last chapter), know that all of them come from Me

<sup>5</sup> vii. 7.

<sup>6</sup> x. 39.

<sup>7</sup> vii. 8-10.

<sup>8</sup> xviii. 61.

<sup>9</sup> xv. 12-15.

<sup>10</sup> vii. 6.

<sup>11</sup> x. 34.

<sup>12</sup> ix. 19.

<sup>13</sup> x. 20, x. 32.

alone.”<sup>14</sup> In another passage, God is declared the source of all “psychic” states and experiences, *good and bad alike*, tho the good predominate in the list: “Enlightenment, knowledge, freedom from delusion, patience, truth, self-control, peace, pleasure, *pain*, coming-into-being, passing away, *fear*, and fearlessness too; harmlessness, indifference (equanimity), content, austerity, generosity, fame, and *disrepute* — the states of creatures, of all various sorts, come from Me alone.”<sup>15</sup> More definite recognition of the origin even of evil in God is found in this: “I am the gambling of rogues, the majesty of the majestic; I am conquest, I am adventure (of conquerors and adventurers); I am the courage of the courageous. . . . I am the violence of conquerors, I am the statecraft of ambitious princes; I too am the taciturnity of things that are secret, I am the knowledge of the learned.”<sup>16</sup>

If even in these passages we seem to find a tendency to slur over the evil of the world and its necessary relation to a quasi-pantheistic God, in other places the Gītā feels it necessary to qualify its semipantheism by definitely ruling out evil from God’s nature. Thus to a passage in the seventh chapter which is strongly suggestive of pantheism, and which I quoted on the preceding page — “I am taste in water, etc.; I am the intelligence of the intelligent, the majesty of the majestic” — there is added this significant verse: “I am the strength of the strong, *free from lust and passion*; I am desire in (all) beings (but) *not* (such desire as is) *opposed to righteousness*.”<sup>17</sup> Thus the Gītā strengthens its appeal to the natural man, or to “common sense,” at the expense of logic and consistency.

This stricture (if it be considered a stricture) seems to me not unfair, even tho I doubt whether it can be said that the Gītā ever commits itself to absolute pantheism. It undoubtedly comes very close to it, as in some of the passages I have quoted. That God is *in* all, or all in God, it frequently says; and hence we may fairly ask whether God is also in that which is evil (or it in Him). But this is not exactly saying that God *is* all, that God is identical with all and all with God, there being no remainder on either side. Such a definitely pantheistic statement is not, I think, to be found in the Gītā. Certainly we find many expressions which seem to deny it. And that in two ways. In the first place, God’s nature may be limited by the exclusion of certain parts of the universe or forms of existence. And secondly, God is spoken of as extending beyond the universe, as including more than “all beings.”

As to the first point, the word “limited” as applied to God’s nature is my own, and would undoubtedly have been strenuously repudiated by the author of the Gītā. He would have said — indeed he *does* say again and again, in many different ways — that God is limitless, that He includes *all*

vii. 12.

<sup>14</sup> x. 4, 5.

<sup>16</sup> x. 36, 38.

<sup>17</sup> vii. 11.

forms. Yet we have seen that at times he feels compelled to deny that God manifests Himself in certain forms of existence which are felt as morally evil; altho at other times he swallows even this dose. Whatever terminology one uses, the fact remains that the Gītā repeatedly manifests a tendency to find God only in the best or highest forms of existence. The worse and lower forms are at least implicitly left out. This tendency is so natural as to be almost inevitable in a writer who is, after all, pervaded by a spirit of ardent, personal theism — however tinged with quasi-pantheism. Philosophically, the doctrine that God is *in* all leaves a loophole which can be stretched to admit a good deal. God is the soul, the essential part of everything; this may be interpreted as meaning the highest or noblest part of everything. Now lay the emphasis on the word *part*, and the trick is turned. Any entity may be regarded as a part of some larger whole, just as any entity (except perhaps, for the time being at least, the modern proton and neutron) may be treated as a compound whole and analyzed into parts. By choosing your “whole” and making it sufficiently inclusive, God can be found in some “part” of every “whole,” and yet excused from responsibility for anything that would seem unworthy of Him. Such a background seems needed to account for such passages as the long series of verses found in the tenth chapter,<sup>18</sup> in which God is identified with (*only*) the first, highest, or best, of every conceivable class of beings: “Of lights I am the sun . . . of stars the moon, of Vedas the Sāma Veda, of gods Indra (the king of the old Vedic gods), of sense-organs the thought-organ . . . of mountains Mount Meru,” and so forth indefinitely.

On the other hand, the Gītā’s theism differs from pantheism also in that it regards God as *more* than the universe. “Whatsoever creature possesses lordliness or majesty or greatness, know thou that every such creature springs from a *fraction* of My glory. . . . With *one part* of Myself I remain the support of this entire universe.”<sup>19</sup> “I am not in them (all beings); they are in Me.”<sup>20</sup> “By Me all this world is permeated, by Me whose form is unmanifest. All beings rest in Me; and I do not rest in them.”<sup>21</sup> In the next verse after this last, the author retracts even this statement; it is too much to say even that the world is in God: “And (yet) beings do not rest in Me; behold My divine mystery! My self is the support of beings, and does not rest in beings; it is the cause of being of beings.”<sup>22</sup> The dictum that the First Principle is more than all existing things, that the universe is only a *part* thereof, is at least as old as the “Puruṣa” hymn of the Rig Veda,<sup>23</sup> in which the entire universe is derived from only one-quarter of the cosmic Puruṣa or “Person.”

<sup>18</sup> x. 21-37.

<sup>19</sup> x. 41, 42.

<sup>20</sup> vii. 12.

<sup>21</sup> ix. 4.

<sup>22</sup> ix. 5.

<sup>23</sup> RV. 10.90.3, 4.

This is by no means the only point in which the Gītā's picture of God shows relations with older formulas for the First Principle. While, as we have seen, the older speculations, so far as we know them, tend to impersonal and non-theistic formulations of the One, still many of the expressions which they use in describing that One can quite well be applied to a personal God; and they and similar expressions are so applied in the Gītā. Many of the Gītā's descriptions of God sound as if they were taken bodily from the Upaniṣads. Thus: "Thou art the Supreme Brahman, the Supreme Station (or Light), the Supreme Purifier; the eternal Puruṣa ('Person,' Spirit), the divine, the Primal God, the Unborn Lord."<sup>24</sup> "The ancient Seer, the Governor, finer than an atom . . . the Establisher of all, whose form is unthinkable, the Sun-colored, who is beyond darkness."<sup>25</sup> "I am the father of this world, the mother, the establisher, the ancestor. . . . The goal, supporter, lord, witness, dwelling-place, refuge, friend; the origin, dissolution, maintenance, treasure-house, the eternal seed (of all)."<sup>26</sup> The term Brahman, favorite expression in the Upaniṣads for the Absolute, is frequently found in the Gītā; and often it is hard to say whether the author means to identify Brahman with God or not. The fact doubtless is that, as set forth in Chapter IV, the Upaniṣadic Brahman has contributed largely to the Gītā's notion of God, which has absorbed it along with other, more theistic elements. As a rule, no clear distinction is made between them. But in one or two places the Gītā shows a realization of a possible difference of opinion as to whether the Supreme is personal or impersonal. And, most interestingly, it definitely recognizes *both* beliefs as leading to salvation, — that is, as in some sense or other true, or at any rate not wholly false; altho it prefers the personal theory. "Arjuna said: 'Those devotees who thus with constant discipline revere Thee, and those who revere the Imperishable, the Unmanifest (i.e., the impersonal Brahman), which of these are the best knowers of discipline?' The Blessed One replied: 'Those who fix their minds upon Me and revere Me with constant discipline, pervaded with supreme faith, them I consider the best-disciplined. But those who revere the Imperishable, Indescribable, Unmanifest, Omnipresent, and Unthinkable, the Immovable, Unchangeable, Immutable, — restraining completely all their senses, and keeping their minds indifferent in all circumstances, devoted to the welfare of all creatures, — they too reach Me after all. Greater is the toil for those who fix their minds on the Unmanifest. For the unmanifest goal is hard for embodied creatures to attain.'"<sup>27</sup> Could we ask for any clearer proof of the thesis set forth in Chapter IV? The abstract, impersonal Absolute of the Upaniṣads was more than the mind of the average man could grasp. The Gītā represents a sort of compromise between that speculative

<sup>24</sup> x. 12.<sup>25</sup> viii. 9.<sup>26</sup> ix. 17, 18.<sup>27</sup> xii. 1-5.

religion and popular theology. It provides an "easier way" to salvation, without denying the possibility of salvation to those hardier intellects which chose the more laborious, abstract path. We shall see later that in other ways, too, the *Gitā* tries to save men the trouble of mental exertion. It is quite characteristic of it to regard intellectual methods as difficult and unnecessary. It is "easier" for the ordinary man to worship a personal, anthropomorphic Deity than to fix his attention on an impersonal Absolute. So the *Gitā*, while allowing man to choose, recommends the belief in a personal God.

Elsewhere the impersonal Brahman is more or less distinctly subordinated to the personal God. Thus the following description is quite Upaniṣadic, except for the single phrase in which the Brahman is described as "ruled by Me": "The object of knowledge I will now set forth, knowing which one gains immortality; the beginningless Brahman, *ruled by Me*; <sup>28</sup> it is declared to be neither existent nor non-existent. It has hands and feet on all sides, eyes, heads, and faces on all sides, hearing on all sides, in the world; it permanently envelops everything. It has the semblance of the qualities of all the senses, but is free from all the senses; it is unattached, and yet it bears all; it is free from the strands, yet it experiences the strands (of material nature). Both without and within all beings; immovable and yet moving; because of its subtlety it cannot be known; it is both afar off and near. Both undivided and as it were divided, it resides in (all) beings; it is to be known as the supporter of beings, and it is their consumer and their originator too. It, too, is called the light of lights, that is beyond darkness; knowledge, and the object of knowledge, and what is to be reached by knowledge; it is settled in the heart of all." <sup>29</sup> The impersonal Brahman is nominally granted all the dignity which the Upaniṣads claim for it — and yet it depends on the personal God. "For I am the foundation of Brahman!" <sup>30</sup> Other passages in which the Brahman is spoken of as the Supreme Soul, the One that is in all creatures, or the "Possessor-of-the-Field," leave us more or less uncertain as to just how the author would have formulated his thought if hard pressed. "When one perceives that the various estates of creatures are all fixed in One, and that it is just from that One that they spread out, then he attains Brahman. Because it is without beginning and free from the strands, this eternal supreme Soul (*ātman*), even tho it resides in the body, does not act, nor is it stained (affected, by actions). As the

<sup>28</sup> Literally, "having Me as the chief"; it is hard to determine the precise nuance of the phrase, but it seems to me to imply some subordination of the Brahman to "Me" (God). Others, by a different division of words, exclude the reference to "Me" from this passage. But xiv. 27, quoted below, is unambiguous and proves that my interpretation is at least possible.

<sup>29</sup> xiii. 12-17.

<sup>30</sup> 'xiv. 27.

omnipresent ether, because of its subtilty, is not stained, so the Soul, residing in every body, is not stained. As the one sun illumines this whole world, so the Possessor-of-the-Field illumines the whole Field (material body)."<sup>31</sup> Is this impersonal, Upaniṣadic monism? Or is the One implicitly thought of under a personal, theistic guise? Or, as in the foregoing, is God the "foundation" of It? In a preceding verse<sup>32</sup> we were told that "I (God) am the Field-knower in all Fields"; this suggests that the "Possessor-of-the-Field" is regarded as the personal God. Again: "But higher than this (world of perishable beings) is another, eternal being . . . which perishes not when all beings perish. (This) unmanifest is called the eternal; they call it the highest goal, which having attained they do not return; *it is My supreme station* (or, *light*). This supreme spirit (*puruṣa*) is to be attained by single devotion; within it all beings rest; by it this universe is pervaded."<sup>33</sup> Again, we might think that we were reading a non-theistic Upaniṣad, but for the little phrase, "it is My supreme station (or, light)." Does this mean something else than that "Brahman is God"? Let the mystic answer. The fact seems to be that the author attempts to avoid careful definition of these terms. Or, to put it otherwise, he does not feel able to get rid of the Upaniṣadic Absolute, but he strives, perhaps unwittingly, to color it with his personal theism.

Elsewhere the theory of man as a dualism, a combination of "soul" and "body" or "material nature," leads to a macrocosmic dualism in which God, the Soul of the Universe, is set over against the cosmic or universal Prakṛti, "Material Nature" as a whole, which is then spoken of as *God's body*, as it were — God's material nature. So God too is dualistic; He has a double nature, a "lower" or material, and a "higher" or spiritual. "Earth, water, fire, wind, ether, thought-organ, consciousness, and I-faculty: thus is divided My material nature, eight-fold. This is (My) lower (nature). But know My other nature, higher than that. It is the Soul by which this world is sustained."<sup>34</sup> And just as the material nature of man confuses and deceives him, so that he thinks that what is really matter is himself (his soul), so he confuses God's body — manifest material nature — with God's unmanifest Self. "Deluded by these conditions of existence, composed of the Three Strands (*guṇas*, of material nature), this whole world fails to know Me, who am superior to them and eternal. For this is My divine illusion (*māyā*, trick, piece of jugglery), composed of the (three) strands, hard to get past. Those who resort solely to Me penetrate beyond this illusion."<sup>35</sup> "Foolish men conceive Me, the Unmanifest, as having become manifest. They do not know My higher nature, everlasting and supreme."<sup>36</sup>

<sup>31</sup> xiii. 30-33.

<sup>32</sup> xiii. 2.

<sup>33</sup> viii. 20-22.

<sup>34</sup> vii. 4, 5.

<sup>35</sup> vi. 13, 1

<sup>36</sup> vii. 24.



The adherents of the Vedānta philosophy interpret such passages as meaning that material nature is "illusion" (*māyā*) in the sense that it does not really exist. I believe they are wrong. The Gītā only means that the Soul — universal Soul or God as well as individual soul — is utterly distinct from material nature or body; the "illusion" consists in the apparent blending of the two. The wise man should realize the distinction; but this does not imply the nonexistence of either. In my opinion the word *māyā* did not acquire its Vedāntic sense of "world-mirage" until long after the Gītā's time. The reality of material nature is clearly indicated in many passages in the Gītā. Thus it accepts the doctrine of evolution and devolution of all nature at the beginning and end of successive world-eons, a theory which is familiar in Hindu cosmogonic speculations, and makes God the "overseer" of the process, and *His* material nature the world-stuff out of which all material creatures evolve and into which they devolve. "All beings pass into My material nature at the end of an eon, and at the beginning of (the next) eon I send them forth again. Resting upon My own material nature, I send forth again and again this whole host of beings, which is powerless (by itself), by the power of (My) material nature. . . . With Me as overseer, material nature creates the world of moving and unmoving beings. This is the cause by which the world revolves." <sup>37</sup> This same process of successive creations in successive eons is alluded to elsewhere <sup>38</sup> and is there treated as wholly material, not even as supervised by the Supreme Soul, which however is mentioned in the following verses <sup>39</sup> as "higher than all that"; He does not perish when all beings perish at the end of an eon. But there is no suggestion in any of these passages that material nature is in any sense unreal.

In another very curious and interesting passage this creative activity is treated as a sexual relation between God, as the Supreme Soul (the male principle), and the female principle of inert or receptive matter. Instead of an evolution of beings out of matter independently of the Supreme Soul, or with Him merely as "overseer" of the process, the Supreme Soul or God "plants the germ" in the womb of nature, and from this union all beings evolve. But here — most curiously — the cosmic matter is not called by the usual name of Prakṛti, material nature, as we should expect <sup>40</sup> (altho this term would be peculiarly appropriate to such a connection, since the word *prakṛti* is grammatically of the feminine gender), but instead is called *Brahman*, which has neuter gender! "My womb is the great Brahman; in

<sup>37</sup> ix. 7, 8, 10.

<sup>38</sup> viii, 18, 19.

<sup>39</sup> viii. 20-22.

<sup>40</sup> And, be it noted, as later speculations call it; for this same sexual figure is used in later philosophy.

it I plant the germ. Thence comes the origin of all beings. Whatsoever forms originate in all wombs, of them great Brahman is the womb (mother); I am the father that furnishes the seed." <sup>41</sup> Brahman may be an equivalent for Prakṛti, material nature, in another passage also: "Whoso lays his actions upon Brahman and does his acts while avoiding attachment (or interest in the results; compare Chapter VII), to him evil does not cling, as water clings not to a lotus-leaf." <sup>42</sup> The context here permits, without compelling, the view that Brahman means "material nature," which is, as we have already seen, solely responsible for all actions. In these passages a strange fate has overtaken the Upaniṣadic Brahman. Originally the Soul of the universe, it has been so far degraded as to be definitely deprived of all spirituality, and identified with the inert cosmic Matter, which is precisely all that is *not* Soul. No more significant indication could be found of the Gītā's personal theism. For nothing could be clearer than the reason for this dethronement of the Brahman. It was impersonal; and so, logically, it must either make way for, or be absorbed by, the personal God of the Gītā. Of these two alternatives, the Gītā, with the catholicity of the true mystic, chooses both, and neither. As we have seen in this chapter, Brahman (1) is absorbed into God, who assumes all its characteristics; (2) is differentiated from God and placed in some sort of subordinate position to Him, or made a lower manifestation of Him; and (3) still at times retains its ancient prestige as the Absolute, the One-in-All. All these positions appear side by side in the Gītā. Often its references to the Brahman are so vague as to leave us in doubt as to just how the author was thinking of it for the moment. <sup>43</sup>

The whole material universe is, then, in some sense God's manifest form or material nature. But of far greater practical importance, for the development of the religion taught by the Gītā, is this further fact, that God, by the exercise of his *māyā* or "mysterious power," can and does take on empiric, personal existence as an individual being in the world of beings. "Tho I am unborn, tho My Self is eternal, tho I am the Lord of Beings, I resort to My own material nature and take on (empiric) being, by My own mysterious power." <sup>44</sup> This is of course a cardinal doctrine of the Gītā.

<sup>41</sup> xiv. 3, 4.

<sup>42</sup> v. 10.

<sup>43</sup> There is no clear indication that the Gītā knew the theory of the Trimūrti, the supreme triad consisting of Brahmā (as a masculine deity, the Creator-God), Viṣṇu, and Śiva, which is familiar in later Hinduism. Only once does the word Brahman in the Gītā have masculine gender unmistakably; in some of its occurrences the form is ambiguous and could be either masculine or neuter, but when unambiguous it is always neuter except in a single instance. In that one occurrence (xi. 15) the god Brahmā is mentioned merely as one of the numerous beings that appear mystically manifested in the vision of the Deity's supreme form as revealed to Arjuna, in the eleventh chapter.

<sup>44</sup> iv. 6.

Kṛṣṇa, the principal speaker in the dialog, is himself such an incarnation of the Deity. He is not the only one; God appears upon earth again and again, to accomplish His purposes. And His purposes are expressed in the following famous verses: "For whenever right languishes, and unright shows its head, then I send Myself forth. To save the righteous, to destroy the wicked, to establish the right, I come into being in age after age." <sup>46</sup> God condescends to become man Himself, for the benefit of mankind. This is the beginning of the famous system of *avatārs* or incarnations of God, which became so characteristic of later Viṣṇuism and a prime source of its strength. No Christian community needs to be told how such a doctrine of a loving God who is born upon earth to save the world can conquer the hearts of men.

Of course, God appears in such an incarnation not in His true, supernal form. That form is not only invisible to the eye of man, or even of the (popular) "gods," but also unknowable to their minds. "I know all beings that have been, that are, and that shall be; but no one knows Me." <sup>46</sup> "The throngs of the gods know not My origin, nor the great seers (*ṛshis*); for I am the starting-point of the gods and the great seers altogether." <sup>47</sup> None but God Himself knows Himself, says Arjuna: "All this I hold to be true, that Thou tellest me; for neither gods nor demons know Thy manifestation, O Blessed One. Thou Thyself alone knowest Thyself by Thyself, O Supreme Spirit, Cause of being of Beings, Lord of Beings, God of Gods, Lord of the World." <sup>48</sup> But as a special act of grace, granted to the few whom God elects, and who serve Him with pure devotion, He may reveal His Supreme form. This He does to Arjuna, in the famous eleventh chapter of the Gītā, the climax of the poem — after first giving him a supernatural power of sight, since his natural eye could not behold the marvel.<sup>49</sup> The mystic vision is revealed by a pure act of God's grace. No amount of pious rites and performances can win it; it is granted only to the chosen of God, and, we are told, to Arjuna first of all mankind. "I in My grace have shown thee, Arjuna, this supreme form of Mine, by My own mysterious power; this majestic, universal, infinite, primeval form, which has not been seen before by any other than thee. Not by the Veda, by sacrifices or study, nor by almsgiving or rites or severe penance, can I be seen in this form by any other than thee in the world of men." <sup>50</sup> As to what Arjuna saw — of course, words fail utterly to describe it. It is the mystic's direct vision of God. The greater part of the eleventh chapter of the Gītā is devoted to the confessedly vain attempt to describe this indescribable. The ecstatic language of the description is hard to transfer to another tongue. Even in externals the passage differs from its surroundings; instead of the sober meter of most of

<sup>46</sup> iv. 7, 8.

<sup>46</sup> vii. 26.

<sup>47</sup> x. 2.

<sup>48</sup> x. 14, 15.

<sup>49</sup> xi. 8.

<sup>50</sup> xi. 47, 48.

the poem, it breaks forth into more elaborate lyric measures, which Sir Edwin Arnold imitates in his English version. The vision is described as "made up of all marvels."<sup>51</sup> "If the light of a thousand suns should suddenly burst forth in the sky, it were like His glory."<sup>52</sup> "Arjuna beheld the whole world there united, and yet infinitely divided, in the form of the God of Gods."<sup>53</sup> Therein were contained all creatures, the gods (Brahmā<sup>54</sup> and the rest), all the seers, the supernatural race of serpents, and all other beings;<sup>55</sup> there was neither beginning nor middle nor end to His form;<sup>56</sup> the sun and moon are His eyes, His face is flaming fire, He burns the whole world with His radiance.<sup>57</sup> And so on. We recognize the type of ecstasy which so many mystics of all times and lands have told of, and which, they all agree, can only be realized at first hand, not described in terms comprehensible to another unless the other be a brother-mystic who has himself enjoyed the experience.

<sup>51</sup> xi. 11.

<sup>52</sup> xi. 12.

<sup>53</sup> xi. 13.

<sup>54</sup> Here occurs the only unmistakable reference to the masculine God Brahmā that is found in the Gītā.

<sup>55</sup> xi. 15.

<sup>56</sup> xi. 16.

<sup>57</sup> xi. 19.

## CHAPTER VII

### ACTION AND REBIRTH

THE metaphysical views set forth in the last two chapters are to be understood as based upon or joined with the structure of general Hinduism which was briefly explained in my third chapter. It never occurred to the author of the *Gītā* to question the doctrines of pessimism, rebirth under the control of karma or "action," and salvation thru ultimate release from that round of rebirths. To him they are not so much points to be proved as underlying principles, which are axiomatic in quality. In emphasizing the immortality of the soul he compares the successive lives of an individual to successive states (childhood, maturity, old age) in one life, or to changes of garments: "As in this body childhood, young manhood, and old age come to the Embodied (Soul), so It proceeds to other bodies. The wise man is not confused in this."<sup>1</sup> "As, laying aside worn-out garments, a man takes on other, new ones, so laying aside worn-out bodies the Embodied (Soul) enters into other, new ones."<sup>2</sup> These existences are, of course, all bodily ones; and that means that they are subject to all the ills that afflict the body. For if, as we have seen, the Soul is in reality independent of the body, it is only the enlightened soul which succeeds in realizing this independence, in perceiving that what affects the body does not affect him. As long as, deluded by the material organ of self-consciousness, the "I-faculty," he imagines that *he* acts and suffers, so long he is enthralled, enchained in the round of existences. It is often stated, and always implied, that this chain is an evil, — that all bodily existence entails misery. Rebirth is called "the home (or source) of misery."<sup>3</sup> What results in its prolongation is therefore evil; what leads to release from it is or should be the chief aim of man. He who has obtained this release goes to the perfect state, *nirvāṇa*.<sup>4</sup>

When it comes to the details of the theory of rebirth and release from it, the Hindu systems are less unanimous, in spite of certain family resemblances. Common to all of them is the doctrine of "karma" or "action, deed," according to which, generally speaking, any action done must have its result, good or bad according to its moral quality, for the doer.<sup>5</sup> It fol-

<sup>1</sup> ii. 13.

<sup>2</sup> ii. 22.

<sup>3</sup> viii. 15.

<sup>4</sup> On which see above, page 23 f.

<sup>5</sup> We shall presently speak of the extent to which this principle is restricted in the teachings of the *Gītā*.

lows from this that in order to get rid of the chain of reincarnation, one must somehow or other be released or excused from the normally inevitable consequences of his actions — even good ones. Otherwise, *any* actions performed must have their fruit in continued existence.

The Gītā itself tells us that, as a consequence of such reasoning, “some wise men say that (all) action is to be abandoned as evil.”<sup>6</sup> Such people choose the path of world-renouncing asceticism which has always had such an appeal to the men of India. In order to escape the effects of action, namely continued existence, they propose simply not to act — or to come as near to that ideal as possible. The ascetic life is advocated not only because it approximates a state of inaction and so tends directly to obliterate “*karma*,” but also because withdrawal from the world is a kind of insurance against being entangled in worldly desires, which lead man astray from his true goal, emancipation. There are passages in the Gītā itself which recommend ascetic methods, such as carefully regulating the breath, fixing the eyes on a spot between the eyebrows, avoiding the “external contacts” of the senses with the objects of sense, holding in check the senses, the organ of thought, and the consciousness or will, and so devoting oneself solely to emancipation.<sup>7</sup> Even more explicitly and in greater detail another passage describes the ascetic practices of the “disciplined man.” “The disciplined man should ever discipline himself, living alone in a secret place. . . . Arranging for himself in a clean place a steady seat that is neither too high nor too low, and that is covered with a cloth and a skin and *kūśa*-grass, there he should concentrate his mind, restraining the activities of his thoughts and his senses, and taking his place upon the seat should practise discipline unto self-purification. Holding his body, head, and neck even and motionless, he should steadfastly gaze at the tip of his nose and not look to one side or another. Abiding in the vow of chastity, his soul at peace and free from fear, restraining his mind, his thoughts fixed on Me (God), the disciplined man should sit absorbed in Me.”<sup>8</sup>

These are not the only passages in which the Gītā uses expressions which suggest a more or less ascetic point of view. Yet such passages are decidedly rare in comparison with those which take the diametrically opposite position that one need not, indeed should not, renounce the world to live the life of a hermit, nor seek to refrain from actions. In general, the Gītā is opposed to asceticism or to renunciation of action as such. I suspect that this has been in large part responsible for its great influence. Altho the ascetic life has always appealed to more people in India, perhaps, than in any other land, still it has never been adopted in practice by more than a small minority. This is inevitable, in the nature of things. Asceticism is too

<sup>6</sup> xviii. 3.<sup>7</sup> v. 27, 28.<sup>8</sup> vi. 10-14.

violently opposed to natural human tendencies. The Gītā provides a religious justification for continuing an approximately normal human life. Therein lies its strength. It does not ask the impossible; and yet it furnishes religious inspiration. It holds out the hope of salvation on terms which are not out of the reach of the great mass of mankind. And it provides for its scheme of salvation a philosophic background, based on commonly accepted Hindu postulates.

As far as concerns the doctrine of "karma" or action as a cause of continued existence, the Gītā meets it in a very simple and convincing, and yet extremely clever, way. It reminds us that back of action lies *desire* or *passion* (either positive or negative, that is "love" or "hate"). It is passion that leads to actions, as we are told already in the Upaniṣads (see page 22), and still more emphatically in Buddhism and other classical Hindu systems. It is this that makes men interested in the results of actions. Now, the Gītā maintains that since desire or passion is more fundamental than action, it is desire, rather than action, which is man's enemy, and against which the preacher of religion must contend.<sup>9</sup> This not only seems very reasonable in itself, but it is quite in keeping with the general trend of higher Hindu religions.

But the Gītā is much more clear-cut and definite than most Hindu systems in deducing from this proposition the inference that there is no binding power in action *in itself*. If a man acts unselfishly, without interest in the result, the action has no effect on his fate; it leaves him free. "The wise call him intelligent all whose undertakings are free from desire and purpose, whose actions are consumed in the fire of knowledge. Abandoning attachment to the fruits of action, ever content, independent, he performs (in effect) no act whatsoever even when he sets out to act. Free from wishes, with controlled thoughts and soul, abandoning all possessions, and performing only acts of the body (not acting with the mind; that is, not feeling interest in his actions), he does not incur guilt. Content with getting what comes by chance, superior to the 'pairs' (of opposites, as pain and pleasure, heat and cold, and the like), free from jealousy, indifferent to success or failure, even when he acts he is not bound. Rid of attachment, free, his mind fixed in knowledge, acting only as a religious duty, all his acts are destroyed (that is, have no binding effect)."<sup>10</sup> Therefore one should act without interest in the result of the action, without "desire or hate." *Indifference* is the great desideratum. It is the same as inaction in effect. It guarantees freedom from the binding effect of "karma." "Whoso neither loathes nor desires is to be regarded as having permanently renounced (action). For he who is free from the 'pairs' (of opposites) is easily freed from the bondage (of existence)."<sup>11</sup> "He should not be delighted at attaining pleasure, nor

<sup>9</sup> iii. 34, 37.

<sup>10</sup> iv 19-23.

<sup>11</sup> v. 3.

should he be distressed at attaining pain." <sup>12</sup> He should "hold alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat." <sup>13</sup>

As I have said, the Gītā goes so far as definitely to oppose the quietistic life. It advises participation in action, in the affairs of life, tho always with an unselfish spirit. "On action alone let thy interest be fixed, never on its fruits. Let not thy motive be the fruits of action; but cleave not to inaction." <sup>14</sup> "Therefore perform ever disinterestedly acts that should be performed. For in performing actions disinterestedly a man attains the highest." <sup>15</sup> "Whoso performs actions that should be performed, without interest in the fruits of action, he is the possessor of renunciation, he the disciplined man, and not he who (merely) abstains from (building the sacrificial) fires and from (ritual) acts." <sup>16</sup> It even goes so far as to hint at insincerity on the part of some renouncers of action, intimating that their thoughts may be more worldly than their actions; altho perhaps all that is intended is to emphasize in the strongest possible way the importance of the mental attitude, rather than of the physical act: "Whoso restrains his organs of action and sits pondering on the objects of sense with his mind, — his soul is deluded; he is called a hypocrite. But whoso restrains his sense-organs with his mind, and with his organs of action engages in discipline-of-action <sup>17</sup> (disciplined action), unattached (to the fruits of action), — he is superior." <sup>18</sup> Harsh penance or self-torture, as practised by some extreme sects of Hindu ascetics, is especially reprobated as doing violence to God, who is within man's person. <sup>19</sup> The true ascetic, according to the Gītā, is he who "renounces" not actions, but selfish interest in actions: "Renunciation of actions due to desires is what the sages hold to be (true) renunciation. Abandonment of the fruits of all actions the wise call (true) abandonment." <sup>20</sup> Moreover, the ascetic position is an impossible one, since *complete* cessation of action is out of the question; he who lives *must* act more or less. <sup>21</sup> God Himself acts, tho of course unselfishly; and of course He cannot be bound by action. <sup>22</sup> Without His action the world would not run; He keeps the universe going and thus sets an example of unselfish action to mankind, and the noble man should follow this example, thus himself setting an example for the common herd. <sup>23</sup> Action is inevitable because it is material nature

<sup>12</sup> v. 20.

<sup>13</sup> ii. 38.

<sup>14</sup> ii. 47.

<sup>15</sup> iii. 19.

<sup>16</sup> vi. 1. On the attitude of the Gītā towards established religion see my tenth chapter.

<sup>17</sup> We shall have more to say of "discipline" in Chapter VIII.

<sup>18</sup> iii. 6, 7.

<sup>19</sup> xvii. 6.

<sup>20</sup> xviii. 2.

<sup>21</sup> iii. 8; xviii. 11.

<sup>22</sup> iii. 20-25, especially 22; iv. 14; ix. 9.

<sup>23</sup> iii. 20 ff.



that acts, thru the power of past actions which compel future actions as their result; to seek to oppose the irresistible power of nature is folly.<sup>24</sup> "Not by not undertaking actions does a man attain to freedom from action, and not by mere withdrawal (ascetic renunciation) does he attain perfection. For there is no one whatsoever that remains even a single moment without performing actions. For every man is forced to perform actions willy-nilly, by the strands (the three *gunas*) that spring from material nature."<sup>25</sup>

But granting that man should perform acts, and should not try to remain inactive, the question still remains, what kind of acts should he perform? Of course, whatever he does should be done in an unselfish spirit, without hope of reward or fear of suffering; but this is not a sufficiently explicit guide in choosing between the manifold possibilities of conduct that lie open to man. The *Gītā* tells us that "perfect action is called that which is *obligatory*, free from attachment, performed without desire or loathing, by one who does not seek the fruits thereof."<sup>26</sup> "Obligatory" here means, doubtless, required by religious duty; this is supported by some other passages: "Man-kind is bound by action, with the exception of action whose object is *religious duty*;<sup>27</sup> perform action for that object, free from attachment (to its fruits)."<sup>28</sup> Religious, charitable, and penitential acts are not binding but "purifying," and should be performed.<sup>29</sup> In other passages, however, "duty" clearly includes acts which cannot possibly, by any stretch, be included in this category. Thus the "duty" of a *kṣatriya*, a member of the warrior caste, is to fight.<sup>30</sup> This is in keeping with a familiar traditional theory among the Hindus, according to which men have different natural duties according to the caste or station in life in which they are born. The performance of religious rites is the natural duty of brahmins; fighting (also giving of alms, protection of the people, and so forth) is that of warriors or nobles; commerce and husbandry of the *vaiśya* caste; service, of the *śūdra* caste, which theoretically consists of serfs. The *Gītā* accepts this theory, and even devotes several stanzas<sup>31</sup> to a definite statement of it, naive and primitive as it seems to us.<sup>32</sup> It says that a man should perform his own

<sup>24</sup> xviii. 60; iii. 33.

<sup>25</sup> iii. 4, 5.

<sup>26</sup> xviii. 23.

<sup>27</sup> The word here used means "worship," or more literally "sacrifice"; but it is used in the *Gītā* in a way which seems to include by extension any kind of duty enjoined by religion.

<sup>28</sup> iii. 9; cf. iv. 23, "if one acts for religious duty, all his acts are wiped out."

<sup>29</sup> xviii. 3, 5, 6.

<sup>30</sup> ii. 31.

<sup>31</sup> xviii. 41-44.

<sup>32</sup> As naive and primitive, let us say, as the theory that it is the natural duty of one man to work ten hours in a steel-mill, and that of another to spend five or six hours in a New York office managing the financial affairs of that mill and others.

native duty, that is, the duty which comes to him by birth, from the caste or station to which he belongs, "to which it has pleased God to call him," "even tho this duty be imperfect," rather than attempt a duty that pertains to another social group.<sup>33</sup> Again, with a different turn, man is told to do the things that are commanded of God, throwing the responsibility on Him, and not seeking to question His wisdom. By so doing, man is freed from the bondage of "karma."<sup>34</sup> It is sinful pride to refuse to obey God's commands, thinking that you know better than God.<sup>35</sup> We may see in these various discussions of "duty," as either innate in the social order or founded on divine commands, groping attempts to formulate definite answers to the very natural question, what concrete acts does "duty" require of man? But it is hardly possible to conceal the unsatisfactory nature of the *Gītā*'s conclusions on this point. The writer, at least, cannot blame Arjuna for inquiring: "If thou holdest the attitude of mind to be more important than action, then why dost thou enjoin me to do this savage deed, O Kṛṣṇa?"<sup>36</sup> Why, indeed, should one fight and slay, even "unselfishly"? This eminently reasonable question is shamelessly dodged by Kṛṣṇa; no real answer is given — perhaps because none can be given.<sup>37</sup> And more often the *Gītā* attempts no concrete definition of duty, but contents itself with saying that man should do his duty simply because it *is* his duty, and with perfect indifference to the results — reminding us of Kant's categorical imperative.

We must, however, refer to another attempt to define duty which the *Gītā* repeatedly presents, and which not only furnishes a very high ethical standard, but is a logical deduction from the best Hindu metaphysics. If God is in all beings, if the soul or real self of all beings is One, it follows that "The wise look alike upon a learned and cultivated brahman, a (sacred) cow, an elephant, a dog, and an outcaste."<sup>38</sup> All beings are one in God;

<sup>33</sup> iii. 35; xviii. 45-48.

<sup>34</sup> iii. 30-32.

<sup>35</sup> xviii. 58, 59.

<sup>36</sup> iii. 1.

<sup>37</sup> I have tried to put the best possible light on the *Gītā*'s teachings in this regard, and have ignored for this purpose certain verses in which the "duty" to fight is enjoined upon Arjuna on still lower grounds, as on the ground that he will be suspected of cowardice if he withdraws from the battle, and so will be despised of men (ii. 34 ff.; contrast xiv. 24, which says one must be indifferent to praise and blame), or even on the ground that if he is slain he will gain heaven (alluding to the popular Hindu belief in a sort of Valhalla for warriors slain in battle), while if he conquers he will enjoy rule over earth (ii. 37). These intrusions of popular ideas, while certainly unworthy of the philosophic standard of most of the *Gītā*, need not be considered interpolations. They simply illustrate the fact to which I have often alluded, that the *Gītā* is not a logical or systematic philosophical treatise, but a poem, containing many inconsistencies in ethical as well as metaphysical notions.

<sup>38</sup> v. 18. Dogs are very unclean animals in India.

by true knowledge "thou shalt see all beings without exception in thyself, and in Me."<sup>39</sup> "He whose soul is disciplined in discipline, seeing the same in all things, perceives himself in all beings, and all beings in himself,"<sup>40</sup> and "Me (God) in all and all in Me."<sup>41</sup> Accordingly one should behave in the same way towards friend and foe, kinsman and stranger, good men and bad;<sup>42</sup> namely, towards all as one would towards oneself. "Whoso looks upon all beings in the same way as upon himself, and sees likeness in all, whether it be pleasure or pain, he is deemed the supreme *yogin* (disciplined man)."<sup>43</sup> Those who are completely pervaded by the awareness of this truth, who feel that all beings are the same as themselves, that all as well as themselves are one with God, are freed from the effects of action and from rebirth; for they, of course, will not "injure themselves (in others) by themselves";<sup>44</sup> they "identify their own selves with the selves of all creatures, and even when they act are not affected ('stained') thereby."<sup>45</sup> "Even in this world, rebirth is overcome by those whose minds are fixed in indifference (the consciousness of sameness). For Brahman is flawless and alike (the same, in all creatures). Therefore such men are fixed in Brahman."<sup>46</sup> "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" - because thy neighbor *is* thyself; God is in both thee and thy neighbor, and both are in God. He who acts in this spirit need not fear that his acts will bind him to further existence.<sup>47</sup>

<sup>39</sup> iv. 35.

<sup>40</sup> vi. 29.

<sup>41</sup> vi. 30.

<sup>42</sup> vi. 9.

<sup>43</sup> vi. 32.

<sup>44</sup> xiii. 28.

<sup>45</sup> v. 7.

<sup>46</sup> v. 19.

<sup>47</sup> Compare Chapter XI.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE WAY OF KNOWLEDGE AND THE WAY OF DISCIPLINED ACTIVITY

THE dispute between those who held that all actions were binding, that is, involved man in continued existence, and those who maintained that acts performed with "indifference" to the results had no such effect, appears to have been only one aspect of a broader difference of opinion. So far we have spoken of what we have called the ascetic position as if it were a purely negative doctrine, teaching merely that man shall be saved by abstention from actions. But we learn from the *Gītā* that the school of thought against which its arguments on this subject are chiefly directed had a much more important positive theory of salvation, which is strictly in accord with the most fundamental principles of Hindu speculation from the *Upaniṣads* (and even before them) onward, and to which the *Gītā* itself feels forced to admit a considerable validity. This positive theory was no other than the "way of knowledge" which we met in *Upaniṣadic* thought, and which we traced back to its origins in the earliest Vedic speculations; the theory that by perfect knowledge man can control his destiny; that "the truth shall make" him "free."

So ingrained in Hindu culture is this belief in the power of supreme esoteric knowledge that probably no Hindu system would venture to deny it. The *Gītā* certainly does not. In many verses it recognizes it as explicitly as possible. "Even if thou shouldst be the worst of all sinners, merely by the boat of knowledge thou shalt cross over all (the 'sea' of) evil."<sup>1</sup> "As a kindled fire burns firewood to ashes, so the fire of knowledge burns all deeds to ashes,"<sup>2</sup> that is, frees man from rebirth, the effect of deeds. Doubt, the opposite of knowledge, is fatal; the ignorant doubter cannot hope for bliss.<sup>3</sup> Man must "cut doubt with the sword of knowledge."<sup>4</sup> Knowledge is better than mere ritual religion: "Better than material sacrifice is the sacrifice (that consists) of knowledge. All action (*karma*) without remainder is completely ended in knowledge."<sup>5</sup> What knowledge? The knowledge of the supreme religious truth which each system professes to teach. Thus in the *Gītā* it is most often knowledge of God. Whosoever knows the mystic truth of God's nature is freed from rebirth and goes to God.<sup>6</sup> But elsewhere it is, for instance, the knowledge of the absolute separateness of soul and

<sup>1</sup> iv. 36.

<sup>2</sup> iv. 37.

<sup>3</sup> iv. 40.

<sup>4</sup> iv. 41, 42.

<sup>5</sup> iv. 33.

<sup>6</sup> iv. 9, 10; vii. 19; x. 3; xiv. 1 ff.

body, the independence of the soul from the body and all its acts and qualities, which brings release from rebirth.<sup>7</sup> In fact, the Gītā, like the Upaniṣads, tends to promise complete emancipation to one who “knows” any particularly profound religious or philosophic truth which it sets forth. This seems to have been characteristic of Hindu systems generally, at least in their early stages.

While different thinkers differed in their formulations of the supreme truth, by knowing which man should gain salvation, it appears that another and perhaps a more important difference, from the practical standpoint, was in their doctrines of method, or in the varying degrees of emphasis laid on various possible methods, for attaining enlightenment. The Gītā refers several times to such differences of method. In one passage it tells us that “some by *meditation* come to behold the Self (Soul, *ātman*) in the self by the self; others by the Sāṃkhya discipline, and others by the discipline of Action. But others, while not having this knowledge, hear it from others and devote themselves to it; even they too cross over death, by devoting themselves to what is revealed.”<sup>8</sup> According to this, true knowledge — here spoken of as knowledge of the *ātman*, the Self or Soul (the context indicates that the author is thinking of the individual soul, as distinguished from matter, rather than of the universal soul) — may be gained in various ways: first, by inner meditation; then, by what is called the Sāṃkhya discipline, and by the “discipline of action”; and fourthly, by instruction from others, if one cannot attain to it by himself. All these methods are possible; all lead to salvation, to “crossing over death,” which implies also escape from rebirth, since rebirth leads to redeath.

It is necessary to consider what the author means by the “Sāṃkhya discipline” and the “discipline of action.” These are technical terms, which require very careful definition. The word which I translate “discipline” is *yoga*. The phrase “discipline of action” renders a Sanskrit compound, *karma-yoga*. Elsewhere the word *yoga* alone is used in the sense of *karma-yoga*; that is, “discipline,” when otherwise undefined, means in the Gītā frequently (and indeed usually) the “discipline of action.” The word *yoga* is unfortunately a very fluid one, used in a great variety of senses; this makes it often hard to give an exact definition of its meaning in any given occurrence. It may mean simply “method, means.” It also means “exertion, diligence, zeal.” And especially it is used to describe a regular, disciplined course of *action* leading to a definite end; in the Gītā and works of its type, to the end of emancipation. In some contemporary works it connotes a system of ascetic-practices culminating in a sort of self-hypnosis, conceived as leading to emancipation, or to some supernatural attainment. When

<sup>7</sup> v. 16, 17 (cf. the preceding verses); xiv. 22-25.

<sup>8</sup> xiii. 24, 25.

used alone, without qualifying epithet, it always denotes, in works of the time of the Gītā, a *practical* method, as distinguished from an *intellectual* method. But in the Gītā its meaning is narrowed down. Here it means the method of salvation which is characterized by participation in normal, worldly action (hence the fuller expression *karma-yoga*, which is synonymous with *yoga* alone in this sense) without interest in the fruits of action. Action characterized by indifference is the central principle. "Yoga is defined as Indifference," says one verse.<sup>9</sup> But it is always an indifference *in action*. The word *yoga* definitely implies *activity*, as it is used in this connection in the Gītā, where it is constantly colored by (often unformulated) association with the other meaning of the word, "energetic performance, exertion." It is then opposed to the system or "rule" or "discipline" (the same word *yoga* is also used, confusingly) of the Sāṃkhya, which is elsewhere called the *jñāna-yoga* or "discipline of knowledge": "In this world a two-fold foundation (of religion) has been expounded by Me of old; by the discipline (or, method) of knowledge of the followers of Sāṃkhya, and by the discipline (or, method) of action of the followers of Yoga."<sup>10</sup>

The word *sāṃkhya* seems to mean "based on calculation"; that is, "philosophical, reflective, speculative method."<sup>11</sup> The adherents of this method believed in knowledge as the supreme and exclusive means of salvation, and in particular, according to the Gītā, they favored renunciation of all "works," of all activities. In the verses just following the one last quoted,<sup>12</sup> the Gītā's author argues against the policy of ascetic renunciation, clearly indicating that he is opposing the doctrine of the Sāṃkhya. In another passage *saṃnyāsa*, a regular term for ascetic renunciation, is contrasted with *karma-yoga*, "discipline of action," and in the next verse but one the same contrast is expressed by the terms *sāṃkhya* and *yoga*.<sup>13</sup> Further light as to the doctrines of the "Sāṃkhya" school is furnished by a passage in which a dissertation on the complete distinction between the soul and the body (see Chapter V) is followed by this verse: "This (preceding) is the point of view set forth in the Sāṃkhya; but hear now this (point of view set forth) in the Yoga."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>9</sup> ii. 48.

<sup>10</sup> iii. 3.

<sup>11</sup> Another theory is that it means "dealing with numbers," because the (later) system called by this name was characterized by many enumerated categories. Tho this interpretation is accepted by many distinguished scholars, it seems to me erroneous. See my article on "The meaning of *sāṃkhya* and *yoga*," *American Journal of Philology*, 45 (1924), 1 ff.; for the literal meaning of *sāṃkhya*, 35 ff.

<sup>12</sup> iii. 4 ff.

<sup>13</sup> v. 2, 4.

<sup>14</sup> ii. 39. The preceding passage referred to is the discussion summed up in ii. 30; there intervene a number of verses which are parenthetical and may possibly be a later interpolation, dealing with wholly unrelated matters. Practically all the rest of the Chapter (vss. 47-72) is devoted to explaining the doctrine of *yoga*, namely, indifference in action (cf. especially ii. 47, 48).

The "knowledge" which the Sāṃkhya taught, therefore, was or included the dualistic doctrine (familiarily accepted in the Gītā) that soul and body are two eternally separate entities.<sup>15</sup>

We have seen that many passages in the Gītā fully recognize the value of knowledge as a means of salvation. We have also found in various connections that the Gītā is very catholic and tolerant; that it is much inclined to admit validity to different points of view. We need not, therefore, be surprised to learn that in several places it definitely recognizes both the Sāṃkhya and the Yoga methods as effective. It even asserts that they are really one at bottom; which is simply another way of saying the same thing, that they both lead to salvation. "Fools say that Sāṃkhya and Yoga are different, not the wise. One who devotes himself only to one of these two obtains completely the fruit of both. The station that is obtained by the followers of Sāṃkhya is also reached by the followers of Yoga. Whoso looks upon Sāṃkhya and Yoga as one has true vision."<sup>16</sup> "Renunciation (of action; that is, the 'way of knowledge' or the Sāṃkhya way) and discipline of action (*karma-yoga*; that is, the Yoga way) both lead to supreme weal."<sup>17</sup>

Yet the same verse of which I have just quoted a part goes on to say: "But of these two, discipline of action (*karma-yoga*) is better than renunciation of action (*karma-saṃnyāsa*)." And the reason, which is given a few verses later, is very interesting. "Renunciation, however, without discipline (*yoga*), is hard to attain. The sage who is disciplined in discipline quickly (easily) goes to Brahman."<sup>18</sup> Again, as above on page 48 f., we find the Gītā looking for the "easy way" to salvation, trying to meet the "man-in-the-street" half-way. It allows validity to the severe, more toilsome path of pure knowledge with ascetic renunciation of all activities. But few can travel that road. The Gītā appeals to the masses; that is why it has always

<sup>15</sup> I have felt it necessary to go into this matter somewhat technically because of the confusingly various ways in which these terms are used, and because of the further confusing fact that these same terms, Sāṃkhya and Yoga, are later applied to two systems of philosophy which have found many adherents in India but which I think did not exist in codified forms at the time of the Gītā. The later Sāṃkhya system is commonly said to be atheistic; and indeed some (by no means all!) of its adherents deny the existence of any World-soul or God. But there is no suggestion of such a view in the "Sāṃkhya" of the time of the Gītā (in my opinion; the contrary has been maintained, but I think wrongly). The later use of the term "Yoga" develops out of another sort of "practical activity" than that indicated by the Gītā as "Yoga." Professor Dasgupta in his *History of Indian Philosophy* (II. 455) rightly defines Sāṃkhya in the Gītā as "the path of knowledge," and (II. 476) sees that it does not mean "the traditional [later] Sāṃkhya philosophy." He comes fairly close to agreeing with my view of Sāṃkhya (apparently without knowing my article mentioned in note 11 above). I regret to say that I think he is utterly wrong on Yoga.

<sup>16</sup> v. 4, 5.

<sup>17</sup> v. 2.

<sup>18</sup> v. 6.

had so many followers. It claims that all the results which accrue to the follower of the strict intellectual method may also be obtained without withdrawing from action. Nay, it claims that even knowledge itself — the direct aim of the intellectual school — may be obtained thru disciplined activity: "For there is no purifier in the world like knowledge. He who is perfected in discipline (*yoga*) in due time finds it (knowledge) in himself."<sup>19</sup> From this point of view we may regard Yoga, disciplined activity, as an auxiliary means, useful in gaining the knowledge that shall bring release, just as devotion to God is elsewhere regarded in the same light.<sup>20</sup> This supports the thesis which I set forth in Chapter III,<sup>21</sup> that in Hindu speculation generally knowledge is to be regarded as the primary means of salvation, and all other methods are in origin secondary helps to the gaining of knowledge, however much they may come to overshadow the original aim.

In the Gītā, then, we find that the way of disciplined activity (*yoga*) is constantly favored at the expense of the way of knowledge and inactivity (*sāṃkhya*), despite the statements quoted above to the effect that either one is good enough as a means of salvation. Discipline and the practiser of discipline (the *yogin* or "possessor of *yoga*," or the *yukta*, "disciplined man") are constantly praised and exalted. "The disciplined man, renouncing the fruit of action, gains final blessedness. The undisciplined, because he acts wilfully (or, according to his lusts), being attached to the fruits (of action), is bound."<sup>22</sup> If one practises this sort of disciplined activity even imperfectly, that is, without completely realizing it in life, still the effect of it is not lost but continues in future births, bringing man ever nearer and nearer to full attainment, until at last, by perfection in discipline, salvation is gained.<sup>23</sup> Disciplined activity is superior not only to the "way of knowledge" but also to asceticism and to orthodox ritual religion: "The disciplined man (*yogin*, 'possessor of discipline') is superior to ascetics, and to the devotees of knowledge he is also considered superior, and to the devotees of (ritual) works he is superior; therefore be disciplined, O Arjuna."<sup>24</sup> It is significant, however, that "love of God" is *not* subordinated to disciplined activity in this list. On the contrary, the very next verse<sup>25</sup> adds that "the most perfectly disciplined man (*yuktatama*) is he who worships Me." In the next chapter we shall take up the method of devotion to God.

Readers may fairly ask for a more exact definition of what is meant by this "disciplined activity," this *yoga*. The Gītā does not fail to furnish it. It is implied by what has been said in this chapter and the preceding one. It consists in doing unselfishly whatever action seems to be required in any

<sup>19</sup> iv. 38.

<sup>20</sup> See page 71 f. below.

<sup>21</sup> Pages 25 ff.

<sup>22</sup> v. 12.

<sup>23</sup> vi. 37-45.

<sup>24</sup> vi. 46.

<sup>25</sup> vi. 47.



given circumstances; taking no interest in the results of the action to the doer, but not seeking to evade responsibility by refusing to act at all. The state of *yoga* is identified with "equanimity, stability of mind." It is described especially in a long passage in the second chapter of the *Gītā*, of which I quote selections here:<sup>26</sup> "Perform actions abiding in discipline, abandoning attachment (to the results), and being indifferent to success or failure; discipline is defined as indifference. For (mere) action is far inferior to discipline of mental attitude. Seek salvation in the mental attitude; wretched are those whose motive is the fruit (of action). He who is disciplined in mind leaves behind him in this life (the effects of) good and bad deeds alike. Therefore practise discipline; discipline in actions brings welfare. For the wise men that are disciplined in mind and abandon the fruits of action are freed from the bonds of rebirth and go to perfect bliss. . . . When one abandons all the desires of the mind and finds contentment by himself in his Self alone, then he is said to have 'stability of mind' (equanimity; synonym for 'discipline'). He whose mind is unperturbed by sorrow and without desire for pleasure, free from longing, fear, and wrath, is called a stable-minded holy man. He who has no desire towards anything, who getting this or that good or evil neither rejoices nor repines, his mind is stabilized. . . . For even the mind of an intelligent and earnestly striving man is violently carried away by the impetuous senses. Restraining them all he should abide in discipline, devoted to Me; for he whose senses are under control has a stabilized mind. . . . The man who abandons all desires and acts without longing, without self-interest and egotism, goes to peace."

In other passages special emphasis is laid on the meaning of the phrase "when one abandons all the desires of the mind and finds satisfaction by himself in his Self alone." What is meant is of course very different from what we mean by "selfishness." The idea is that internal joys are the only true ones; external joys, that is, those which result from the senses thru external stimulants, are both transitory and illusory. "With soul unattached to outside contacts, when he finds joy in the Self, his soul disciplined with the discipline of (i.e., that leads to) Brahman, he attains eternal bliss. For the enjoyments that spring from (outside) contacts are nothing but sources of misery; they are transitory (literally, 'they have beginning and end'); the wise man finds no pleasure in them. He who even in this life, before being freed from the body, can control the excitement that springs from desire and wrath, he is disciplined, he is blessed. Whoso finds his joy, his delight, and his illumination *within*, he, the disciplined, becomes Brahman, and goes to the *nirvāṇa* of (or, that is) Brahman."<sup>27</sup> "In which (state of *yoga*,

<sup>26</sup> ii. 48-72. The word "discipline" in my translation always renders *yoga*, and "disciplined" renders the corresponding participle *yukta*.

<sup>27</sup> v. 21-24.

discipline) the thought comes to rest, held in check by the practice of discipline, and in which, contemplating the Self by the Self, one finds satisfaction in the Self; in which he experiences that infinite bliss which is to be grasped (only) by the consciousness and is beyond the senses, and in which firmly established he cannot be moved from the truth; having gained which he realizes that there is no greater gain than it; established in which he is not moved by any sorrow, however great; he shall know this remover of all contacts with sorrow that is known as Yoga. This Yoga (discipline) should be practised with determination, with heart undismayed.”<sup>28</sup> “But the man who finds his delight only in the Self, and his contentment and satisfaction only in the Self, for him there is (in effect) no action to be done. He can have no interest whatever in action done nor yet in action not done in this world, nor has he any dependence of interest in all beings (that is, he cannot be affected for either better or worse by anything from outside of himself).”<sup>29</sup>

Of particular interest is one verse which speaks of *moderation* in all things as a characteristic of the “disciplined” follower of *yoga*: “There is no discipline in him who eats too much, not yet in him who fasts completely; neither in him who indulges in too much sleep, nor yet in him who sleeps not at all.”<sup>30</sup> This very pointedly emphasizes the opposition of the policy of “discipline” to that of asceticism, which was characterized by long-continued fasts, sometimes to the point of self-starvation, and by other extreme practices. This is one of the points of contact between the Gītā and Buddhism, for Buddhism too makes much of the doctrine of the “golden mean,” opposing the extreme of self-torture as well as the extreme of worldliness.<sup>31</sup>

In closing this chapter I wish to reaffirm the fact that, in spite of occasional disparagements of the “way of knowledge,” the Gītā’s doctrine of disciplined activity really has an intellectual basis. The reason for acting with indifference is that actions cannot really affect the soul for good or ill; they concern matter exclusively. He who *knows* this will be steadfast in *yoga*, in indifference. This is brought out with admirable clarity in the last passage which I shall quote in describing the disciplined man: “As to both illumination and activity and delusion,”<sup>32</sup> he neither loathes them when they appear nor longs for them when they have vanished (that is, he is indifferent to all

<sup>28</sup> vi. 20–23.

<sup>29</sup> iii. 17, 18.

<sup>30</sup> vi. 16.

<sup>31</sup> Similar expressions occur, to be sure, in late texts of the (later, systematic) “yoga” philosophy; and this point has been taken as an indication of interrelationship between the latter and Buddhism. See Oldenberg, *Upanishaden und Buddhismus*, 1st ed., p. 327; 2d ed., p. 282.

<sup>32</sup> These are the characteristic marks of the three “strands” of material nature, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*; see page 39.

material things). Taking part (in actions) as a disinterested participant, he is not perturbed by the (three) strands (of matter); he stands firm and unmoved in the thought that it is only the strands that are active. He is indifferent to pain and pleasure, and self-contained; clods of earth, stones, and gold are all one to him, pleasant and unpleasant things alike; he is wise (or, steadfast), and careless of praise or blame. Unmoved by honor or dishonor, alike to friend and foe, renouncing all enterprises, he is declared to have transcended the strands (of matter)."<sup>33</sup> In so far as the *Gītā* quarrels with what it calls the *Sāṃkhya* school, it is really not so much on the question of the power of knowledge, nor on the definition of what true knowledge is. It is rather because of the policy of complete abstention from actions which the *Gītā* attributes to the followers of *Sāṃkhya*. This is directly opposed to the doctrine of activity with indifference, which the *Gītā* usually preaches with all possible force — altho, as we saw in the last chapter, it contains passages which are inconsistent even with this.

<sup>33</sup> xiv. 22-25.

## CHAPTER IX

### THE WAY OF DEVOTION TO GOD

IT HAS required something like a *tour de force* to reserve for this place a treatment of the relation of God to human salvation in the teachings of the Gītā. For in a sense it has involved temporarily ignoring the most cardinal doctrine of the poem. Yet the poem itself affords a precedent for approximately such an arrangement. The Gītā does not begin with this subject; and references to it in the early chapters are few and scattering. In the middle chapters of the work it gradually becomes more prominent, until it finally occupies the center of the stage, with the climax in the eleventh chapter, in which the mystic vision of God's supernal form is revealed to Arjuna.<sup>1</sup> After this, somewhat anti-climactically, the Gītā gradually drops into other themes again, to return to the theme of salvation thru God towards the end of its final, summary chapter (the eighteenth).

But in spite of our best efforts it has proved impossible to avoid some anticipation of this theme in the preceding chapters. In fact, with all the mixture of discordant theories which the Gītā contains, it is nevertheless so prevalently and devoutly theistic that its theism colors many of its expressions on other themes. So the various schemes of salvation, largely inherited from Upaniṣadic speculation, are reinterpreted in the Gītā in terms of its personal theism. The Upaniṣads taught that "knowledge" of the First Principle of the universe would lead to salvation. But the First Principle of the universe is God, declares the Gītā. It follows that knowledge of God is what brings salvation.<sup>2</sup> Freedom from rebirth comes from attainment — not of an impersonal First Principle, but — of God.<sup>3</sup>

Knowledge, however, whether of Brahman or of a personal God, is "hard to attain," as we have seen.<sup>4</sup> The difficulties of the intellectual method are emphasized in many places in the Gītā. Easier for the most of mankind is a more emotional scheme of salvation. This is what the Gītā furnishes by its famous doctrine of *bhakti*, "devotion" or "love of God." Tho not en-

<sup>1</sup> Page 53 f.

<sup>2</sup> Page 62.

<sup>3</sup> viii. 15, 16 etc.

<sup>4</sup> "Among thousands of men perhaps one strives for perfection. Even of those who strive and perfect themselves, rarely does one know Me in very truth." (vii. 3) "Hard to find is the noble soul who knows that Vāsudeva (a name for Kṛṣṇa = God) is all." (vii. 19) But: "Whoso always reveres Me with thoughts ever straying to no other object, for him I am easy to attain." (viii. 14)

tirely unknown to the Upaniṣads,<sup>5</sup> it is almost a new note in Hindu religious speculation. No doubt it originated in more popular forms of religion, which have left no written records. In the nature of things it could hardly be found, or at least could hardly be prominent, except in theistic religions. For "devotion" or "love" can hardly be felt except for a divine *personality*. That is why it is practically absent from the older forms of Hindu philosophic religion which are known to us.<sup>6</sup> Their divine principles were too impersonal. But we have good reason to believe that side by side with these abstract speculations there had long existed popular cults which worshiped various local gods and heroes; the Kṛṣṇa of the Bhagavad Gītā evidently originated as such a local deity. And it may fairly be taken for granted that in many or most of these cults devoted love of the god on the part of his worshipers, and perhaps vice versa, had played a considerable role.<sup>7</sup>

We have already seen that the Gītā's religion is a compromise between the speculation of the intellectuals and the emotionalism of popular religion. So the notion of *bhakti*, devotion, enters into its scheme of salvation by a side door, without at first displacing the old intellectual theory of salvation by knowledge. At least it is rationalized in this way. It is represented that by devoted love of God one can attain knowledge (of God), and so *indirectly* the salvation which comes thru this knowledge: "By devotion one comes to know Me, what My measure is and what I am in very truth; then, knowing Me in very truth, he straightway enters into Me."<sup>8</sup> So after the mystic revelation of his true form to Arjuna, Kṛṣṇa declares that such a revelation can come to a man thru no other means than devoted love: "But by unswerving devotion it is possible to know Me in this form, Arjuna, and to behold Me in very truth, and (so) to enter into Me."<sup>9</sup> Thus it is possible logically to reconcile the theory of devotion with the theory so often expressed that knowledge of God is what brings man to union with Him, that is, to salvation. Devotion to God is an auxiliary means of gaining knowledge of Him. It is significant that one of the Upaniṣad passages which men-

<sup>5</sup> See page 26 f.

<sup>6</sup> In the polytheism of the Rig Veda we do, indeed, find some traces of a relationship of love and trust between man and his gods, particularly as concerns the god Agni, the divine fire, who is found in every man's house and is "the friend of man." There is a wide gap, however, both in time and in spirit, between this and the "devotion" of the Bhagavad Gītā.

<sup>7</sup> The striking correspondence in externals between the Gītā's *bhakti* and the Christian love of God led some, in earlier days, to believe that the Gītā had borrowed the notion from Christianity. The correspondence is interesting, but it certainly does not justify such a theory. Undoubtedly, the two religions developed independently. The Gītā is now known to be almost certainly pre-Christian in date.

<sup>8</sup> xviii. 55.

<sup>9</sup> xi. 54.

tion the method of "devotion" speaks of it in the same way, as a means of getting knowledge.<sup>10</sup>

But not for long — if ever consistently — was the way of devotion subordinated to the way of knowledge. Usually the Gītā speaks of devotion as the immediate and all-sufficient way to final union with God. "Fix thy mind and devotion on Me; worship Me and revere Me. Thou shalt come even to Me by thus disciplining thy soul in full devotion to Me."<sup>11</sup> "Fix thy thought-organ on Me alone, let thy consciousness sink in Me, and thou shalt come to dwell even in Me hereafter; of that there is no doubt."<sup>12</sup> Even wicked men quickly become righteous and attain salvation thru devotion to God; even low-caste men, and women (who are a low grade of creatures), may be saved in the same way; "no devotee of God is lost."<sup>13</sup>

This quasi-miraculous salvation thru devotion is frequently represented as due to special divine intervention on behalf of the devotee. God, as it were, cancels the laws of nature for the benefit of his devoted worshipers, and brings them to salvation by divine grace. "But those who, laying all actions upon Me, intent on Me, meditate on Me and revere Me with utterly unswerving devotion, for them I speedily become the Savior from the ocean of the round of (rebirths and) deaths, because their thoughts are fixed on Me."<sup>14</sup> Therefore one should "abandon all (other) duties (or, religious practices or systems)" and make God his sole refuge; then "I will save thee from all evils; be not grieved!"<sup>15</sup> In another passage it is explained differently; God is represented as impartial to all men, having no favorites, but still the devotee is, by reason of his devotion, united with God: "I am alike to all beings; none is either hated or loved of Me. But those who revere Me with devotion — they are in Me and I too am in them."<sup>16</sup>

Even "discipline" (*yoga*), of which so much was said in the last chapter as a favorite way of salvation, is granted to the devotee by God. This again seems to suggest that devotion is not the immediate way to salvation, but a help towards it, in that it assists the devotee along the way — the way being here not the way of knowledge but that of "discipline." "To those ever-disciplined ones that revere Me lovingly, I grant the discipline of mind whereby they come unto Me."<sup>17</sup> In the very next verse God grants the light of *knowledge* to the devotee: "To show compassion to these same ones I, while remaining in My own true state, dispel their darkness that is born of ignorance by the shining light of knowledge."<sup>18</sup> All this simply amounts to saying that devotion is the way *par excellence* — that it is the key-road,

<sup>10</sup> See page 27.

<sup>11</sup> ix. 34.

<sup>12</sup> xii. 8; similarly viii. 7; xi. 55.

<sup>13</sup> ix. 30-32.

<sup>14</sup> xii. 6, 7.

<sup>15</sup> xviii. 66; cf. ix. 22.

<sup>16</sup> ix. 29.

<sup>17</sup> x. 10.

<sup>18</sup> x. 11.

which controls all other roads to salvation. The passage quoted at the end of the last chapter, describing the man who is perfectly disciplined and whose discipline is founded on true knowledge, is followed by this: "And he who serves Me with the unswerving discipline of *devotion*, transcends these strands (of matter) and is fit for becoming Brahman (that is, for emancipation)." <sup>19</sup> The way of knowledge and the way of disciplined activity are allowed their place; but the way of devotion controls them. Similarly after a passage <sup>20</sup> which sets forth the ascetic position, there is added the recommendation that the ascetic should fix his thoughts on God; by so doing he shall attain "the peace that culminates in *nirvāṇa*, and that rests in Me." <sup>21</sup> We referred above to the significant fact that in a passage glorifying "discipline" (*yoga*), the disciplined man is declared to be superior to ascetics, to followers of the path of knowledge, and to those who adhere to the rites of orthodox religion, but not to adherents of the method of devotion to God; on the contrary, "the most perfectly disciplined man is he who devoutly reveres Me, with his soul fixed on Me." <sup>22</sup> In one passage, which is curiously typical of the catholic or eclectic attitude which we have repeatedly noticed as characteristic of the *Gītā*, we are given to understand that God may be reached (and this implies complete emancipation) in several ways. First, we are commanded to sink our hearts completely in loving devotion to God. "However, if thou canst not fix thy thoughts steadfastly on Me, then seek to win Me by discipline of practice (that is, by what is elsewhere called simply *yoga*, 'disciplined activity'). If incapable even of practice, be wholly devoted to work for Me; by performing actions for My sake (as described in the next paragraph) thou shalt also win perfection. But if thou art unable even to do this, resorting to My discipline then make abandonment of all fruits of action (that is, act unselfishly, as set forth in Chapter VII), controlling thyself." <sup>23</sup> The way of devotion is the favorite one to the author of the *Gītā*; but he admits the validity of other ways too, if for personal reasons a man finds them preferable. Still oftener, all these various ways are more or less vaguely blended and felt as in the last analysis essentially one; but the devotional coloring is perhaps the most constant characteristic of the blend.

As indicated in the last quotation, the attitude of devotion to God has an important bearing on the question of action and its results under the doctrine of *karma*, discussed in my seventh chapter. Not only does duty require that one should do the commands of God, <sup>24</sup> but a sure way to escape any of the normal results of action, in continued rebirth, is to "do all as a gift to God" or to "resign all actions to God"; that is, to throw upon Him

<sup>19</sup> xiv. 26.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted above, page 56 f.

<sup>21</sup> vi. 15.

<sup>22</sup> vi. 47; see page 66.

<sup>23</sup> xii. 9-11.

<sup>24</sup> iii. 30-32.

all responsibility for actions; if one acts only in a spirit of loving devotion to God and of trust in Him, relying upon Him to settle the matter, He will save the devotee from the effects of action; that is, from further rebirth. "Whatever thou doest, whatever thou eatest, whatever thou offerest (in oblation), whatever thou givest, whatever austerity thou performest, that do as a gift to Me. Thus thou shalt be freed from the bonds of action with its fruits, whether good or evil; thy soul shall be disciplined in the discipline of renunciation, and thou shalt be freed and shalt attain unto Me."<sup>25</sup> Let a man perform his own natural duty<sup>26</sup> as a service to God: "A man finds perfection in worshiping Him from whom comes the activity (or, origin) of all beings, by whom this universe is pervaded — *by doing action appropriate to himself*."<sup>27</sup> "Taking refuge in Me, tho ever performing all acts, by My grace a man attains the eternal, undying station. Casting mentally all acts upon Me, devoted to Me, cleaving to discipline of mind, keep thy thoughts ever fixed on Me."<sup>28</sup> "Thinking on Me, by My grace thou shalt cross over all difficulties"; refusal to do so would be a sign of pride and self-conceit, an indication that man thinks he knows more than God; such a man would perish; and he could not, after all, avoid the acts to which his nature impels him; "material nature will coerce" him.<sup>29</sup> Nor need man fear that anything done in true, loving devotion to God will be ignored by Him. God accepts the humblest offering of His devotees, taking it in the spirit in which it is meant: "If a man offers Me with devotion (*bhakti*) a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or a sip of water — that loving gift of My devotee I accept (literally, I eat)."<sup>30</sup>

It is specially important that one should fix his mind on God at the time of death. According to a familiar belief among the Hindus, the attitude of mind at the hour of death is particularly influential in determining man's state after death.<sup>31</sup> The following verse of the Gītā expresses the traditionally accepted view: "Whatever condition of being one meditates on as he leaves the body at death, precisely to that condition he goes, his whole nature being infused therewith."<sup>32</sup> That is why to this day all pious Hindus

<sup>25</sup> ix. 27-28.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. page 59.

<sup>27</sup> xviii. 46.

<sup>28</sup> xviii. 56, 57.

<sup>29</sup> xviii. 58, 59.

<sup>30</sup> ix. 26.

<sup>31</sup> Indeed, according to the Gītā (viii. 23-27), the time of death is so important in determining man's future fate, that the "disciplined man" and "knower of Brahman" attains freedom from rebirth if he dies at a favorable time, but is reborn again if he dies at an unfavorable time. Favorable times are "fire, light, day, the bright half of the lunar month (when the moon is waxing), the six months during which the sun moves northward." Their opposites are unfavorable. There are interesting parallels in Christian and Jewish ideas on the importance of the "hour of death"; see Edgerton, "The Hour of Death," *Annals of the Bhundarkar Institute* (Poona), 8. 219 ff.

<sup>32</sup> xviii. 6.



meditate on their respective sectarian deities, and recite their sacred mantras or holy formulas, at the hour of death, hoping thereby to gain salvation. Accordingly the Gītā does not hesitate to promise this result to one who meditates on God at death: "He who at the hour of his death passes out and leaves his body while meditating on Me alone, goes to My estate; of this there is no doubt."<sup>33</sup> "(Whosoever thinks on God) at the time of his death with unswerving mind, disciplined (*yukta*) in devotion (*bhakti*) and in the power of discipline (*yoga*) too, making his breath to pass wholly into the space between his eyebrows, he goes to that supreme, divine Spirit (*puruṣa*). . . . Pronouncing the single (sacred) syllable Om (which is) Brahman, thinking upon Me, he who (thus) leaves the body and dies goes to the highest goal."<sup>34</sup>

The characteristics of the perfect devotee of God are very much like those attributed to the possessor of "discipline" as described in the last chapter. Indeed, the two are really one. 'The true possessor of "discipline" will be devoted to God; devotion to God involves or brings with it perfection in discipline. Perhaps the note of joy, of bliss, is more definitely present in descriptions of the devotee than of the "disciplined" man. "Those whose thoughts and lives are centered upon Me, who are ever enlightening one another and telling about Me (giving 'testimony,' as some Christian sects say), are filled with joy and contentment."<sup>35</sup> The true devotee is described in the following passage: "Not hostile to all creatures, friendly and compassionate, unselfish and without egotism, indifferent to pain and pleasure, patient, contented, ever disciplined, self controlled, of firm resolve; he who is devoted to Me and has fixed his mind and consciousness upon Me, is dear to Me. Before whom people do not tremble and who does not tremble before people, who is free from the excitement of joy, impatience, fear, and agitation, he too is dear to Me. Unconcerned, pure, capable, disinterested, imperturbable, abandoning all undertakings, such a devotee of Mine is dear to Me. Who neither delights nor loathes, neither grieves nor craves, who renounces pleasant and unpleasant objects, and is full of devotion, he is dear to Me. Who is the same to friend and foe, indifferent to honor and disgrace, to heat and cold, to joy and sorrow, who has abandoned all attachment, to whom praise and blame are all one, restrained in speech, content with whatsoever (his lot may be), having no fixed habitation, of steadfast mind, full of devotion, he is dear to Me. But those devotees of Mine who believe and accept this nectar of religious doctrine as I have expressed it (in the Bhagavad Gītā), intent on Me, they are beyond measure dear to Me."<sup>36</sup>

<sup>33</sup> viii. 5.

<sup>34</sup> viii. 10, 13.

<sup>35</sup> x. 9.

<sup>36</sup> xii. 13-20.

The very heart, the quintessence, of the doctrines of the Gītā is declared by Hindu commentators to be found in this verse:<sup>7</sup> "He who does My work, who is devoted to Me and loves Me, who is free from attachment (to worldly things) and from enmity to all beings, goes to Me, Son of Pāṇḍu!"

<sup>7</sup> xi. 55.

## CHAPTER X

### ATTITUDE TOWARDS HINDU ORTHODOXY AND OTHER RELIGIOUS BELIEFS

THE curious many-sidedness, tolerance, or inconsistency — whichever one may choose to call it — of the Bhagavad Gītā, which we have noted in nearly every chapter of this book, is shown nowhere more strikingly than in its attitude towards what we may call orthodox, established religion.

By this I mean the system of traditional sacrifices and observances, founded ultimately upon the Vedic cult, which became accepted by Brahmanism and were in the time of the Gītā, and have remained even to this day, theoretically incumbent upon all pious Hindus, at least of the upper castes. This system of rites implied and implies very little in the way of beliefs. It was and is, almost exclusively, a matter of formal observances. It is a matter of conformance to traditional propriety in actions; so long as one conforms outwardly, it makes little difference what he believes inwardly. It does, to be sure, imply recognition of the privileged status of the brahman caste, as the hereditary custodians of the cult, and the nominal leaders of society. No sacrifice was supposed to be valid unless a brahman was hired to perform it.

The original theory of this orthodox cult is fairly stated in the Bhagavad Gītā: "The gods, being prospered by sacrifices, shall grant you the enjoyments you desire. He who without giving to them enjoys their gifts is nothing but a thief."<sup>1</sup> That is, it is a matter of commercial bargaining between the old, traditional gods (not to be confused with the God of the Bhagavad Gītā!) and men. The gods control benefits, and grant them in exchange for the gratifications of the sacrifice. It is man's duty to furnish these gratifications; otherwise he would be getting something for nothing. In this passage the Gītā unhesitatingly commends this system. It even says that actions of the sacrifice have no binding effect,<sup>2</sup> and that sacrificers "are freed from all sins,"<sup>3</sup> altho, to be sure, it adds that it is wicked to perform even such acts "selfishly,"<sup>4</sup> — a statement that is hardly consistent with the theory of the ritual cult just quoted, which seems to imply that the whole basis of it is a matter of selfish interest. The fact is, however, that this theory, which is inherited from Vedic times, is not ordinarily brought out clearly in the Gītā or in other later religious texts. It is more often ignored or slurred over. The Gītā contains passages in which sacrificial

<sup>1</sup> iii. 12.

<sup>2</sup> iii. 9.

<sup>3</sup> iii. 13.

<sup>4</sup> iii. 12

acts are spoken of as part of man's duty and to be performed simply *qua* duty — "abandoning attachment."<sup>5</sup> "Actions of sacrifice, alms, and penance are not to be abandoned; on the contrary they are to be performed. Sacrifice, alms, and penance are purifying for the wise. But even these actions are to be performed with abandonment of attachment and (of desire for) their fruits; that is my definite and final judgment."<sup>6</sup> "Sacrifice which is offered as contemplated by injunctions, by men who are not seeking the fruits thereof, simply because it is their duty to sacrifice, concentrating their minds, that is sacrifice of the highest quality."<sup>7</sup>

Otherwise it is possible by a mystic or symbolic interpretation of the word "sacrifice" to make it mean, or include, things which are quite different from commonplace ritual performance, and more in keeping with the general trend of the Gītā's teachings. In one passage we find indeed a statement which sounds like a thoro-going acceptance of the ritual dogma: "Those who eat the nectar of the leavings of the sacrifice go to the eternal Brahman. Not even this world, still less any other, is for him who does not sacrifice."<sup>8</sup> But in the surrounding stanzas<sup>9</sup> the word "sacrifice" is interpreted as including many different kinds of religious practices: restraint of the senses, devotion to the Brahman, ascetic austerities, "disciplined activity" (*yoga*), study, and "knowledge"; and all these are recognized<sup>10</sup> as forms of "sacrifice" that have their validity. It is added that "the sacrifice of knowledge is better than material sacrifice; all action (*karma*) without remainder is completely ended in knowledge."<sup>11</sup> The "sacrifice of knowledge" means, of course, the intellectual method of salvation, and equally of course it has nothing whatever to do with ritual sacrifices. It is only by mystic symbolism that the term "sacrifice" can be applied to it at all.

On the other hand there are not wanting in the Gītā passages which definitely disparage the ritual religion. "Those who take delight in the words of the Veda" are called "undiscerning," "full of desires, aiming at heaven"; their doctrines "yield rebirth as the fruit of actions," and are "replete with various rites aiming at the goal of enjoyment and power."<sup>12</sup> "The Vedas belong to the realm of the three strands (of material nature); be thou free from the three strands!"<sup>13</sup> The really wise man has no more need for the "knowledge" of the Vedas (the word *Veda* means "knowledge") than he needs a water-tank (for irrigation) when there is a general flood.<sup>14</sup> If so pronounced a polemic attitude is exceptional, there are various other passages which treat the ritual religion with scant respect. A man who gets

<sup>5</sup> iv. 23.<sup>6</sup> xviii. 5, 6.<sup>7</sup> xvii. 11.<sup>8</sup> iv. 31.<sup>9</sup> iv. 23-33.<sup>10</sup> iv. 30.<sup>11</sup> iv. 33.<sup>12</sup> ii. 42, 43.<sup>13</sup> ii. 45.<sup>14</sup> ii. 46.

out of the "jungle of delusion" will become disgusted with the revealed religion or holy "tradition," and in turning against this holy "tradition" he will acquire discipline (*yoga*).<sup>15</sup> God's true form can never be known thru religious works.<sup>16</sup> He does not reveal Himself to the adherents of the traditional cult, not even to the gods to whom that cult is devoted, who long in vain for a sight of Him;<sup>17</sup> they know nothing of His nature and origin, and the seers (*rshis*) who are the reputed authors of the Vedic hymns are equally ignorant.<sup>18</sup>

The orthodox cult is put in its place, so to speak, in the statement that "those who desire the success of (ritual) acts sacrifice in this world to the gods."<sup>19</sup> That is, if you want the sort of thing that sacrifice is designed to accomplish, by all means sacrifice, and you will get it. It is a low sort of aim; but such as it is, if one honestly seeks it, he shall find it. And that precisely because of his sincerity and devotion to what he conceives, however mistakenly, to be his religious duty. "Those who are deprived of knowledge by this or that desire (for some fruit of religious actions) resort to other deities (than Me); they take up various religious systems, being constrained by their own natures."<sup>20</sup> If they are sincere, they get the fruit they seek; but it is the one true God, whom they know not, who gives it to them. "Whoever seeks to worship with true faith and devotion any (other) form (of deity), for him I make that same faith unswerving, and, being disciplined in that faith, he devotes himself to worship of that (form of deity), and obtains therefrom his desires, since it is none but I that grant them!"<sup>21</sup> True and righteous ritualists, "worshiping Me by means of sacrifices," duly succeed in gaining the sensuous heaven which is one of the traditional rewards of ritualism, and enjoy divine pleasures there.<sup>22</sup> But of course this is a very limited form of success. Such "heavenly" existences are finite; they belong to the round of rebirths just as much as do earthly human lives. When the effect of their religious merit is exhausted, such men fall to earth again.<sup>23</sup> All that has nothing to do with the real goal of man, which is release from *all* existence.

What is true of orthodox ritualism is true of all other sorts of religion. Any religion is better than none. Whole-hearted and unqualified condemnation is reserved for those "demoniac" (wicked) men who "say that the world is untrue, without any basis (religious principle upon which to rest), without God, not produced by regular mutual causation, in short, motivated by desire."<sup>24</sup> The "materialistic" school here referred to is accused by its

<sup>15</sup> ii. 52, 53

<sup>16</sup> xi. 48.

<sup>17</sup> xi. 52, 53

<sup>18</sup> x. 2, 14.

iv. 12.

<sup>20</sup> vii. 20.

<sup>21</sup> vii. 21, 22.

<sup>22</sup> ix. 20.

<sup>23</sup> ix. 21.

<sup>24</sup> xvi. 8.

opponents of having taught that all religion and philosophy were nonsense; that there was no guiding principle in the world; that all was chance; that the alleged moral law of the effect of deeds on the doer was baseless; that there was no soul, and no life after death; and that consequently the wise man was he who devoted himself to getting as much worldly enjoyment out of life as he could. Such doctrines are of course abhorrent to the *Gītā*, as to all the accepted forms of Hinduism. On the other hand, those who genuinely tho erroneously worship other gods are really worshipping the true God, tho they do not know it; and God accepts their worship, imperfect tho it be. "Even those who are devoted to other deities and worship them, filled with faith, they too really worship Me, tho not in correct fashion. For I am both the recipient and the lord of all worship (literally, 'of all sacrifices'). But they do not know Me aright. Therefore they fall."<sup>25</sup> "They fall"; that is, the "heavenly" rewards which they attain are finite, and upon the exhaustion of the merit acquired by their sincere tho mistaken religious practices, they return to ordinary worldly life again. "But finite are these fruits which come to such ignorant men. Those who revere the (popular or ritualistic) gods go to the gods; those who revere Me go to Me."<sup>26</sup> So each religion brings its suitable reward: "Votaries of the gods go to the gods; votaries of the 'fathers' (spirits of the dead), to the 'fathers'; worshipers of the goblins go to the goblins; My worshipers also go to Me."<sup>27</sup> And, as the last paragraph shows, it is really thru the one God that the followers of other religions gain their objects. Since those objects are necessarily imperfect and limited, because their seekers are by definition ignorant of the true goal of man, it remains true that one should "abandon all (other) religious duties" and make (the one true) God alone his refuge.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> ix. 23, 24.

<sup>26</sup> vii. 23.

<sup>27</sup> ix. 25.

<sup>28</sup> xviii. 66.

## CHAPTER XI

### PRACTICAL MORALITY

THE Gītā's attitude toward practical morality is characteristic of most Hindu religions. In its relation to the ultimate goal of salvation, morality is only a secondary means. It alone is never sufficient to achieve that goal. But on the other hand it leads to ever better and higher existences, and helps to prepare for final success.

The importance of morality comes out most clearly on the negative side. Immorality is clearly regarded as a serious, indeed usually a fatal, hindrance.<sup>1</sup> To be sure we are told that "if even a very wicked man worships Me with single devotion, he is to be regarded as righteous after all; for he has the right resolution";<sup>2</sup> and again that "even if thou shouldst be the worst sinner of all sinners, thou shalt cross over all (the 'sea' of) evil merely by the boat of knowledge."<sup>3</sup> These passages suggest a sort of magic absolution from sin by devotion to God, or to knowledge, as the case may be. It might be inferred from them that it makes little or no difference what a man may do, so long as he succeeds in possessing himself of the key to salvation. This is, however, probably not a fair inference from the Gītā's words. In the first place we must remember that the Gītā is poetic in its language and not infrequently emphasizes its ideas by a certain overstatement. To drive home the importance of "devotion" or "knowledge" it attributes to each of them in turn the power to absolve from the most heinous sins. Secondly, the Gītā undoubtedly means to imply a reformation and repentance on the part of the sinner as a prerequisite, or at least concomitant, to the attainment of "devotion" or "knowledge." We are, indeed, told elsewhere in definite terms that wicked men cannot, in the nature of things, possess true devotion or knowledge either. "Wicked and deluded evil-doers do not resort to Me; their intelligence is taken away by (My) illusion (*māyā*), and they remain in the 'demoniac' condition."<sup>4</sup> (We shall see what is meant by the "demoniac" condition in the next paragraph.) In another passage "knowledge" is defined at length in distinctly ethical terms; that is, he who is wise is necessarily also righteous, as Socrates said. Knowledge includes "absence of pride and deceit, harmlessness, patience, uprightness, devotion to one's teacher,

<sup>1</sup> xvi. 22, which means to imply only that one must get rid of immorality first, before seeking the way to salvation.

<sup>2</sup> ix. 30.

<sup>3</sup> iv. 36.

<sup>4</sup> vii. 15.

purity, firmness, self-control, aversion to the objects of sense, unselfishness," and so forth; "indifference" and "devotion to God" are also included.<sup>5</sup> Again a description of the qualities of the perfected man, who is fit for union with Brahman, includes abstention from lust and hatred and from such vices as selfishness, violence, pride, desire, and anger.<sup>6</sup>

The sixteenth chapter of the *Gītā* is wholly devoted to a sort of practical moral code. It tells us that there are two kinds of "nature" or "condition" or "estate" of man, the "divine" and the "demoniac"; that is, the good and the bad, the sheep and the goats. The good estate tends towards emancipation, the bad towards continued bondage in existence.<sup>7</sup> That is, more explicitly, men who are bad or "demoniac" by nature are reborn again and again; they fail to reach God, and their fate is wretched,<sup>8</sup> while the good come finally to salvation.<sup>9</sup> The good are characterized by "fearlessness, purification of being, steadfastness in the discipline of knowledge (or, knowledge and disciplined activity), generosity, self-control, sacrifice, (religious) study, austerities, and uprightness; harmlessness, truth, freedom from anger, abandonment (or, generosity), serenity, freedom from malice, compassion to all creatures, uncovetousness, gentleness, modesty, no fickleness; majesty, patience, fortitude, purity, non-violence, freedom from pride."<sup>10</sup> The characteristics of the wicked are described and illustrated at much greater length. In general they are, of course, the opposites of the qualities just mentioned. But emphasis is laid on the ignorance of the wicked,<sup>11</sup> on their materialistic and atheistic philosophy,<sup>12</sup> on their overweening pride and stupid self-confidence.<sup>13</sup> "Resorting to egotism, violence, arrogance, lust, and wrath, they hate Me in their own bodies and those of others, these envious men";<sup>14</sup> that is, by their misdeeds they wrong God, who is in themselves and in other men. All their vices are finally traced to three primary vices, desire or lust, wrath, and greed, "a threefold gate to hell, destroying the soul."<sup>15</sup> He who is subject to them cannot hope for perfection or bliss.<sup>16</sup> In another passage desire or lust and wrath are referred to as the twin causes of all vice.<sup>17</sup> This seems indeed sufficient, since avarice or greed is only a specialized form of desire or lust. "Desire and loathing" is the formula in other places.<sup>18</sup> And since "loathing" is merely negative desire, while "wrath" or "passion" is only a pragmatic manifestation or result of desire, whether positive or negative, we find that in the last analysis "desire" is the root of all evil.<sup>19</sup>

<sup>5</sup> XIII. 7-11.

<sup>6</sup> XVIII. 51-53.

<sup>7</sup> XVI. 5.

<sup>8</sup> XVI. 20.

<sup>9</sup> XVI. 22.

<sup>10</sup> XVI. 1-3.

<sup>11</sup> XVI. 7.

<sup>12</sup> XVI. 8; cf. page 79 f.

<sup>13</sup> XVI. 13 ff.

<sup>14</sup> XVI. 18.

<sup>15</sup> XVI. 21.

<sup>16</sup> XVI. 23.

<sup>17</sup> III. 37.

<sup>18</sup> E.g., III. 34.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. pages 22 and 58 above.



One positive feature of the *Gītā*'s morality deserves special mention. As we saw above at the end of Chapter VII, the metaphysical doctrine that the one universal Soul is in all creatures furnishes an admirable basis for a very lofty type of morality. Since one's own Self or Soul is really identical with the Self or Soul of all other creatures,<sup>20</sup> therefore one who injures others injures himself. "For beholding the same Lord (the universal Soul) residing in all beings, a man does not harm himself (his own self in others) by himself; so he goes to the final goal."<sup>21</sup> Thus one of the most striking and emphatic of the ethical doctrines of the *Gītā* is substantially that of the Golden Rule. Man must treat all creatures alike, from the highest to the lowest,<sup>22</sup> namely like himself.<sup>23</sup> The perfected man "delights in the welfare of all beings."<sup>24</sup> This principle is usually regarded as perhaps the highest formulation of practical ethics that any religion has attained. It is interesting to see how naturally and simply it follows from one of the most fundamental tenets of the *Gītā*'s philosophy.

A genuine application of this moral principle would seem almost inevitably to include avoidance of any violent injury to living beings. And, as is well known, most Hindu sects have in fact applied it in this way, at least in theory, and to a considerable extent in practice. "Non-violence" or "harmlessness" (*ahimsā*) has generally been accepted as a cardinal virtue. It finds expression for instance in the vegetarian diet which so many Hindus have always favored, and in the policy of pacifism and "passive resistance" which, while never adopted universally, has probably had more followers at every period in India than in most other lands.

The *Gītā*'s morality on this point is somewhat disappointing. It does indeed include "harmlessness" or "non-violence" (*ahimsā*) in several of its lists of virtues.<sup>25</sup> But it never singles it out for special emphasis. It seems to be content to let it lie buried in such more or less formal moral catalogs. One gets the impression that it was too prominent and well-recognized a virtue to be ignored; so some lip-homage is paid to it. But it is never definitely and sharply applied in such a form as "Thou shalt not kill." The *Gītā* contrasts strikingly in this respect with some other Hindu sects, such as the Buddhists and (still more) the Jains. It seems a little strange, at first sight, to find any Hindu religious text treating the doctrine of non-violence in so stepmotherly a fashion. But of course the reason is quite evident. The *Gītā* is hampered by the fact that it is supposed to justify Arjuna's partici-

<sup>20</sup> iv. 35; v. 7; vi. 29, etc.

<sup>21</sup> xiii. 28.

<sup>22</sup> v. 18; cf. vi. 9.

<sup>23</sup> vi. 32.

<sup>24</sup> v. 25.

<sup>25</sup> xiii. 7 and xvi. 2, quoted on pp. 81, 82; also x. 5 and xvii. 14.

pation in war. This dramatic situation is alluded to repeatedly, and the author seems to have it in the back of his head a large part of the time. To be sure, many of his doctrines are inconsistent enough with such a purpose, as we have abundantly seen. And we must not forget, either, that "non-injury" is clearly implied in the Gītā's teachings on the subject of unselfishness and doing good to others. That is, to carry out these teachings in any real sense would necessarily involve doing no harm to living creatures. But to lay a frank and full emphasis upon this principle, to follow it out explicitly to its logical conclusion, would mean to run so glaringly counter to the professed aim of the piece, that it is not strange that the author avoids doing so. Even his catholicity seems to have shrunk from such an inconsistency as that. We can hardly help feeling, however, that he lost a golden opportunity thereby.

**THIRD PART**  
**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**



## CHAPTER XII

### SUMMARY

#### FIRST PART: PRELIMINARY CHAPTERS

**CHAPTER I. *Introductory.*** — The Bhagavad Gītā, the Bible of Kṛṣṇaism, is dramatically a part of the Mahābhārata. Its ostensible purpose is to prove to Arjuna, one of the heroes of that epic, the necessity and propriety of taking part in the battle which is the epic's main theme. In actual fact, it is a mystic poem, dealing with the nature of the soul and body of man, man's relation to God, and the way or ways by which man is to attain salvation. It is poetic, mystical, and devotional, rather than logical and philosophical. It contains many discordant doctrines; to try to unite them all in a consistent system is to do violence to its spirit. In this respect it is like all Hindu speculative literature of its time and earlier, — particularly like the Upaniṣads, to which it is deeply indebted. Like them, too, it is practical in its attitude, seeking religious or philosophic truth not for its own sake but as a means of human salvation.

**Chapter II. *The Origins of Hindu Speculation.*** — Out of the ritualistic polytheism, based on nature-worship, of the Rig Veda, developed on the one hand the pure ritualism of the Brāhmaṇa texts, on the other hand tentative speculations leading towards either monotheism or monism, — seeking to explain the constitution of the universe and of man in terms of a unitary principle. This unitary principle is at first often described concretely and physically; but with the passage of time the tendency is towards ever more abstract and metaphysical terms, culminating in such expressions as "the Existent" (*sat*), or "the Self, Soul" (*ātman*). The influence of ritualistic terms is also evident, particularly in the use of the Brahman, the embodiment of the ritual religion, as a name for the principle of the universe. From very early times the texts set up a parallelism between the universe, the macrocosm, and man, the microcosm.

**Chapter III. *The Upaniṣads, and the Fundamental Doctrines of Later Hindu Thought.*** — In the Upaniṣads this parallelism becomes an identity, by the Brāhmaṇa principle of mystic identification: the Soul of the universe is identified with the Soul of man, and by this identification man hopes to "know" and so magically to control the universe, which is declared to be his self. In the Upaniṣads, too, we find the first clear statements of the basic axioms of later Hinduism, which may be summed up as follows. First, *pessimism*: all empiric existence is evil. Second, *transmigration*, with the

doctrine of *karma*: all living beings are subject to an indefinite series of re-incarnations, and the conditions of each incarnation are determined by the moral quality of acts performed in previous incarnations. Third, *salvation* lies in release from this chain of existences; it is to be gained primarily by *knowledge* of the supreme truth, which has a quasi-magic power of giving its possessor control over his destiny. As secondary or auxiliary means of salvation are mentioned morality, asceticism in some form or other, and devotion to a supreme being or prophetic personality. These seem originally to have been meant as aids to the attainment of saving knowledge, and they have little importance in the Upaniṣads; but in various later sects one or another of them at times becomes so important as to obscure the originally primary aim of "knowledge."

Chapter IV. *Prehistory of the God of the Bhagavad Gītā*. — The Deity of the Gītā seems to be a blend of the impersonal Upaniṣadic Absolute with a popular god or deified hero, Kṛṣṇa, who was identified with the Vedic god Viṣṇu. The combination thus formed contained, therefore, elements which could appeal to orthodox ritualists, to speculative intellectuals, and to the untutored masses.

## SECOND PART: THE TEACHINGS OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA

Chapter V. *Soul and Body*. — All creatures are composed of two eternal and eternally distinct elements, soul and body. The body, including what are called "psychic" elements, is material; is subject to evolution, devolution, and change of all sorts; and consists of a blend of various elements or qualities. The soul is immaterial, uniform, unchangeable, without qualities, and inactive. All action is performed by the material body, upon other material bodies or substances. The soul neither acts nor is affected by action; indeed it is not affected by any influence outside of itself. It has only contemplative powers. Ordinary creatures, however, confuse body and soul, owing to the disturbing influence of the material organ of self-consciousness, and imagine that their souls act and suffer. The enlightened man realizes the true distinction between soul and body; his soul is thereby freed from the bondage of connection with the body, whence come action and suffering; and he attains release.

Chapter VI. *The Nature of God*. — God is pictured as the First Principle of the universe, the Soul of all; the highest or best part of all; the noblest aspect of all; immanent in all (sometimes even in what is considered evil, but sometimes only in what is considered good). God seems generally to be regarded as a principle distinct from either the soul or the body of individual beings, tho they are all "in Him." He transcends the universe. Sometimes

the Upaniṣadic Brahman seems to be identified with God; but at other times Brahman is distinguished from God, and is then ordinarily subordinated to Him. At times God is spoken of dualistically; his "lower nature" is the empiric, material universe, his "higher nature" is supernal and beyond the ken of empiric creatures. God takes on individual incarnations to save the world of men; such an incarnation is Kṛṣṇa. His supreme form is revealed only as a rare act of grace to His elect; such an act of grace is granted to Arjuna, who beholds God's very Self in a mystic vision.

Chapter VII. *Action and Rebirth.* — Any action, good or bad, must normally have its effect in continued existence for the doer. But the Gītā says that this is due not to the action as such, but to *desire* underlying the action. Acts performed with indifference to the results, without interest in the outcome, have no binding effect. It is therefore unnecessary to renounce action altogether. It is even improper to do so — as well as impossible. We cannot refrain from action if we would, and we should not if we could. Man must do his duty, without desire or fear of the consequences. Most often duty is not defined; we are told simply to do our duty *qua* duty, as a sort of categorical imperative, without selfish interest. At other times attempts are made to define duty in terms of religious or social requirements, or on the basis of the oneness of man with his neighbors and with God, from which is deduced the duty of treating others as oneself.

Chapter VIII. *The Way of Knowledge and the Way of Disciplined Activity.* — The Gītā distinguishes two schools of thought which it calls Sāṃkhya and Yoga. By Sāṃkhya it means the doctrine of salvation thru the power of perfect knowledge, implying withdrawal from the world and renunciation of actions. By Yoga it means the opposing doctrine that one should seek emancipation by unselfish performance of duty. Both of these doctrines are recognized as leading to salvation, and in particular the power of knowledge is fully admitted in various places. Nevertheless the Gītā usually prefers the way of "indifference in action" or "disciplined activity," which is spoken of as leading to knowledge, or else as bringing salvation directly, and more "easily" than the way of knowledge and inaction.

Chapter IX. *The Way of Devotion to God.* — This is a still "easier" way of gaining salvation, and is most favored of all in the Gītā, altho it too is at times spoken of as bringing man to salvation indirectly, by perfecting him in "knowledge" or "discipline." By filling his being with love of God, and doing all acts as a service to God, man attains union with Him; that is, salvation. Sometimes God is spoken of as Himself intervening to help his devotees towards this goal. It is particularly important that man should fix his mind on God at the hour of death; this has a special tendency to bring the soul of the dying man to God.

Chapter X. *Attitude Towards Hindu Orthodoxy and Other Religious Be-*

*liefs.* — The Gītā contains some expressions that are distinctly hostile to the orthodox ritualistic religion. In general, however, it is tolerant of it, or even recommends the “disinterested” performance of its rites, as a matter of “duty.” Towards rival religions in general its attitude is broad and tolerant; it admits a qualified validity to all acts of sincere religious devotion.

Chapter XI. *Practical Morality.* — While morality has only minor importance in the Gītā’s scheme of salvation, immorality is usually regarded as a fatal obstacle to it. Desire is the most fundamental cause of vice. The most prominent specific ethical principle in the Gītā is that of doing good to others, treating others as oneself. Yet the injunction to do no harm to any living creature, tho it is a logical inference from that principle and tho it is very prominent in most Hindu ethical systems, is barely mentioned in the Gītā and receives no emphasis.



## CHAPTER XIII

### CONCLUSION

IT HAS been my purpose in this book to let the Bhagavad Gītā tell its own story in the main, with as little comment of my own as possible. However, the mere topical arrangement of the Gītā's materials is in itself an implied comment; for it is wholly foreign to the Gītā itself, which constantly juxtaposes unrelated matters and widely separates passages dealing with the same subjects. And it has seemed to me, after all, neither desirable nor possible to refrain from indicating the relations between the various doctrines of the Gītā as they appear to me.

For this, to me, is what an interpretation must be. I should not know how to attempt any other kind. And I am obliged to believe that it is worth attempting; that if one succeeded, the result would help towards understanding the Gītā. To bring together its different answers to this or that question must surely be useful. And it does not prevent a true view of the book, so long as one is careful to emphasize the fact that logical arrangement is not intended in the book itself. This I have tried to make very clear. Without this proviso, it might perhaps be maintained that to present the book's doctrines in logical arrangement is to violate its spirit.

For, as we have now abundantly seen, the Gītā makes no attempt to be logical or systematic in its philosophy. It is frankly mystical and emotional. What we may, if we like, call its inconsistencies are not due to slovenliness in reasoning; nor do they express a balanced reserve of judgment. This is sufficiently proved in several cases by the fact that the Gītā deliberately brackets two opposing views and asserts the validity of both. It is only in the realm of logic that we must choose between yes and no, or else confess ignorance. The Gītā finds no difficulty in saying both yes and no, at the same time. For its point of view is simply unrelated to logic. Even what it calls "knowledge" is really intuitional perception; it is not, and is not intended to be, based on rational analysis. And, as we have seen, "knowledge" is not the Gītā's favorite "way of salvation." To the Gītā, as to the Christian mystics, reason is an uncertain and flickering light. The truly "wise" man should abandon it wholly and follow the "kindly Light," the *lux benigna*, of God's grace. He must sink his personality in ecstatic devotion to God, trusting absolutely in Him, and throwing upon Him all responsibility, doing all deeds as "acts of worship" to God. In the long run nothing else matters. Of course, the Gītā differs from the Christian mystics in some

of its fundamental doctrines; for after all it is a Hindu work, and shares the common Hindu axioms. Yet in the practical outcome of its teachings it is astonishing to see how close it comes to many of them. It recalls them in its mystical, anti-rational point of view; in its ardent, personal, devotional theism; in its subjectivity, its focusing of the attention within, to the exclusion of all interest in that which is outside the individual's soul ("the Kingdom of God is within you"); and in its conception of the final goal as complete union with God, a state of supernal and indescribable bliss and peace.

There is one other characteristic of the Gītā's teachings, which seems to me to show such good psychology that it might be commended to the consideration of the Christian mystics; whether it is paralleled in their expressions or not, I do not know. The Gītā, we have seen, values the emotional and the concrete above the rational and the abstract *because* they are "easier." It is less troublesome to feel than to think. I take it that it needs no argument to prove the truth of this claim. It is equally evident that doctrines imbued with this spirit might naturally be expected to win popularity. I have already suggested that the enormous following which the Gītā has always had in India may be due in large part to its readiness to meet the ordinary man on his own ground, to make salvation as easy as possible for him. Objection might be raised against such an attitude from the rationalistic point of view; the rationalist may say that what is easier for man to grasp is not necessarily truer or as true. But from the Gītā's mystical point of view a man is as he feels; if he feels united with God, he is — or at least he shall be — united with God. And, speaking pragmatically, the Gītā's position is justified by the fact that many millions of men have found religious comfort in it, and expected salvation thru it. Who can say that they were disappointed? And if it should be granted that they were not, would not the Gītā have proved the usefulness of its doctrines, and so their pragmatic "truth"?

**THE SONG CELESTIAL**

**SIR EDWIN ARNOLD'S TRANSLATION OF THE  
BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ**



# THE SONG CELESTIAL

SIR EDWIN ARNOLD'S TRANSLATION OF THE BHAGAVAD GĪTĀ

## CHAPTER I

DHRITARASHTRA:

Ranged thus for battle on the sacred plain —  
On Kurukshetra — say, Sanjaya! say  
What wrought my people, and the Pandavas?

SANJAYA:

When he beheld the host of Pandavas  
Raja Duryôdhana to Drona drew,  
And spake these words: "Ah, Guru! see this line,  
How vast it is of Pandu fighting-men,  
Embattled by the son of Drupada,  
Thy scholar in the war! Therein stand ranked  
Chiefs like Arjuna, like to Bhîma chiefs,  
Benders of bows; Virâta, Yuyudhân,  
Drupada, eminent upon his car,  
Dhrishtaket, Chekitân, Kâsi's stout lord,  
Purujit, Kuntibhôj, and Saivya,  
With Yudhâmanyu, and Uttamauij  
Subhadra's child; and Draupadi's; — all famed!  
All mounted on their shining chariots!  
On our side, too, — thou best of Brahmans! see  
Excellent chiefs, commanders of my line,  
Whose names I joy to count: thyself the first,  
Then Bhishma, Karna, Kripa fierce in fight,  
Vikarna, Aśwatthâman; next to these  
Strong Saumadatti, with full many more  
Valiant and tried, ready this day to die  
For me their king, each with his weapon grasped,  
Each skilful in the field. Weakest — meseems —

Our battle shows where Bhishma holds command,  
 And Bhima, fronting him, something too strong!  
 Have care our captains nigh to Bhishma's ranks  
 Prepare what help they may! Now, blow my shell!"

Then, at the signal of the aged king,  
 With blare to wake the blood, rolling around  
 Like to a lion's roar, the trumpeter  
 Blew the great Conch; and, at the noise of it,  
 Trumpets and drums, cymbals and gongs and horns  
 Burst into sudden clamor; as the blasts  
 Of loosened tempest, such the tumult seemed!  
 Then might be seen, upon their car of gold  
 Yoked with white steeds, blowing their battle-shells,  
 Krishna the God, Arjuna at his side:  
 Krishna, with knotted locks, blew his great conch  
 Carved of the "Giant's bone;" Arjuna blew  
 Indra's loud gift; Bhima the terrible —  
 Wolf-bellied Bhima — blew a long reed-conch;  
 And Yudhisthira, Kunti's blameless son,  
 Winded a mighty shell, "Victory's Voice;"  
 And Nakula blew shrill upon his conch  
 Named the "Sweet-sounding," Sahadev on his  
 Called "Gem-bedecked," and Kāśi's Prince on his.  
 Sikhandi on his car, Dhrishtadyumn,  
 Virāta, Sātyaki the Unsubdued,  
 Drupada, with his sons, (O Lord of Earth!)  
 Long-armed Subhadra's children, all blew loud,  
 So that the clangor shook their foemen's hearts,  
 With quaking earth and thundering heav'n.

Then 'twas —

Beholding Dhritarashtra's battle set,  
 Weapons unsheathing, bows drawn forth, the war  
 Instant to break -- Arjun, whose ensign-badge  
 Was Hanuman the monkey, spake this thing  
 To Krishna the Divine, his chariotcer:  
 "Drive, Dauntless One! to yonder open ground  
 Betwixt the armies; I would see more nigh  
 These who will fight with us, those we must slay  
 To-day, in war's arbitrament; for, sure,  
 On bloodshed all are bent who throng this plain,  
 Obeying Dhritarashtra's sinful son."

Thus, by Arjuna prayed (O Bharata!)  
Between the hosts that heavenly Charioteer  
Drove the bright car, reigning its milk-white steeds  
Where Bhishma led, and Drona, and their Lords.  
"See!" spake he to Arjuna, "where they stand,  
Thy kindred of the Kurus:" and the Prince  
Marked on each hand the kinsmen of his house,  
Grandsires and sires, uncles and brothers and sons,  
Cousins and sons-in-law and nephews, mixed  
With friends and honored elders; some this side,  
Some that side ranged: and, seeing those opposed,  
Such kith grown enemies — Arjuna's heart  
Melted with pity, while he uttered this:

ARJUNA:

Krishna! as I behold, come here to shed  
Their common blood, yon concourse of our kin,  
My members fail, my tongue dries in my mouth,  
A shudder thrills my body, and my hair  
Bristles with horror; from my weak hand slips  
Gandiv, the goodly bow; a fever burns  
My skin to parching; hardly may I stand;  
The life within me seems to swim and faint;  
Nothing do I foresee save woe and wail!  
It is not good, O Keshav! nought of good  
Can spring from mutual slaughter! Lo, I hate  
Triumph and domination, wealth and ease,  
Thus sadly won! *Aho!* what victory  
Can bring delight, Govinda! what rich spoils  
Could profit; what rule recompense; what span  
Of life itself seem sweet, bought with such blood?  
Seeing that these stand here, ready to die,  
For whose sake life was fair, and pleasure pleased,  
And power grew precious: — grandsires, sires, and sons,  
Brothers, and fathers-in-law, and sons-in-law,  
Elders and friends! Shall I deal death on these  
Even though they seek to slay us? Not one blow,  
O Madhusudan! will I strike to gain  
The rule of all Three Worlds; then, how much less  
To seize an earthly kingdom! Killing these  
Must breed but anguish, Krishna! If they be  
Guilty, we shall grow guilty by their deaths;

Their sins will light on us, if we shall slay  
 Those sons of Dhritarashtra, and our kin;  
 What peace could come of that, O Madhava?  
 For if indeed, blinded by lust and wrath,  
 These cannot see, or will not see, the sin  
 Of kingly lines o'erthrown and kinsmen slain,  
 How should not we, who see, shun such a crime —  
 We who perceive the guilt and feel the shame —  
 Oh, thou Delight of Men, Janârdana?  
 By overthrow of houses perisheth  
 Their sweet continuous household piety,  
 And — rites neglected, piety extinct —  
 Enters impiety upon that home;  
 Its women grow unwomaned, whence there spring  
 Mad passions, and the mingling-up of castes,  
 Sending a Hell-ward road that family,  
 And whoso wrought its doom by wicked wrath.  
 Nay, and the souls of honored ancestors  
 Fall from their place of peace, being bereft  
 Of funeral-cakes and the wan death-water.<sup>1</sup>  
 So teach our holy hymns. Thus, if we slay  
 Kinsfolk and friends for love of earthly power,  
*Ahovatt!* what an evil fault it were!  
 Better I deem it, if my kinsmen strike,  
 To face them weaponless, and bare my breast  
 To shaft and spear, than answer blow with blow.

So speaking, in the face of those two hosts,  
 Arjuna sank upon his chariot-seat,  
 And let fall bow and arrows, sick at heart.

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER I. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

*Entitled "Arjun-Vishâd,"*

*Or "The Book of the Distress of Arjuna."*

<sup>1</sup> Some repetitionary lines are here omitted.



## CHAPTER II

**SANJAYA:**

Him, filled with such compassion and such grief,  
With eyes tear-dimmed, despondent, in stern words  
The Driver, Madhusudan, thus addressed:

**KRISHNA:**

How hath this weakness taken thee? Whence springs  
The inglorious trouble, shameful to the brave,  
Barring the path of virtue? Nay, Arjun!  
Forbid thyself to feebleness! it mars  
Thy warrior-name! cast off the coward-fit!  
Wake! Be thyself! Arise, Scourge of thy foes!

**ARJUNA:**

How can I, in the battle, shoot with shafts  
On Bhishma, or on Drona — oh, thou Chief! —  
Both worshipful, both honorable men?

Better to live on beggar's bread  
With those we love alive,  
Than taste their blood in rich feasts spread,  
And guiltily survive!  
Ah! were it worse — who knows? — to be  
Victor or vanquished here,  
When those confront us angrily  
Whose death leaves living drear?  
In pity lost, by doubtings tossed,  
My thoughts — distracted — turn  
To Thee, the Guide I reverence most,  
That I may counsel learn.  
I know not what would heal the grief  
Burned into soul and sense,  
If I were earth's unchallenged chief —  
A god — and these gone thence!

SANJAYA.

So spake Arjuna to the Lord of Hearts,  
And sighing, "I will not fight!" held silence then.  
To whom, with tender smile (O Bharata!)  
While the Prince wept despairing 'twixt those hosts,  
Krishna made answer in divinest verse:

KRISHNA:

Thou grieveest where no grief should be! thou speak'st  
Words lacking wisdom! for the wise in heart  
Mourn not for those that live, nor those that die.  
Nor I, nor thou, nor any one of these,  
Ever was not, nor ever will not be,  
For ever and for ever afterwards.  
All, that doth live, lives always! To man's frame  
As there come infancy and youth and age,  
So come there raisings-up and layings-down  
Of other and of other life-abodes,  
Which the wise know, and fear not. This that irks —  
Thy sense-life, thrilling to the elements —  
Bringing thee heat and cold, sorrows and joys,  
'Tis brief and mutable! Bear with it, Prince!  
As the wise bear. The soul which is not moved,  
The soul that with a strong and constant calm  
Takes sorrow and takes joy indifferently,  
Lives in the life undying! That which is  
Can never cease to be; that which is not  
Will not exist. To see this truth of both  
Is theirs who part essence from accident,  
Substance from shadow. Indestructible,  
Learn thou! the Life is, spreading life through all;  
It cannot anywhere, by any means,  
Be anywise diminished, stayed, or changed.  
But for these fleeting frames which it informs  
With spirit deathless, endless, infinite,  
They perish. Let them perish, Prince! and fight!  
He who shall say, "Lo! I have slain a man!"  
He who shall think, "Lo! I am slain!" those both  
Know naught! Life cannot slay. Life is not slain!

Never the spirit was born; the spirit shall cease to be never;  
Never was time it was not; End and Beginning are dreams!

Birthless and deathless and changeless remaineth the spirit for ever;  
Death hath not touched it at all, dead though the house of it seems!

Who knoweth it exhaustless, self-sustained,  
Immortal, indestructible, --- shall such  
Say, "I have killed a man, or caused to kill"?

Nay, but as when one layeth  
His worn-out robes away,  
And, taking new ones, sayeth,  
"These will I wear to-day!"  
So putteth by the spirit  
Lightly its garb of flesh.  
And passeth to inherit  
A residence afresh.

I say to thee weapons reach not the Life,  
Flame burns it not, waters cannot o'erwhelm,  
Nor dry winds wither it. Impenetrable,  
Unentered, unassailed, unharmed, untouched,  
Immortal, all-arriving, stable, sure,  
Invisible, ineffable, by word  
And thought uncompassed, ever all itself,  
Thus is the Soul declared! How wilt thou, then,  
Knowing it so, --- grieve when thou shouldst not grieve?  
How, if thou hearest that the man new-dead  
Is, like the man new-born, still living man ---  
One same, existent Spirit --- wilt thou weep?  
The end of birth is death; the end of death  
Is birth: this is ordained! and mournest thou,  
Chief of the stalwart arm! for what befalls  
Which could not otherwise befall? The birth  
Of living things comes unperceived; the death  
Comes unperceived; between them, beings perceive  
What is there sorrowful herein, dear Prince?

Wonderful, wistful, to contemplate!  
Difficult, doubtful, to speak upon!  
Strange and great for tongue to relate,  
Mystical hearing for every one!  
Nor wotteth man this, what a marvel it is,  
When seeing, and saying, and hearing are done!

This Life within all living things, my Prince!  
 Hides beyond harm; scorn thou to suffer, then,  
 For that which cannot suffer. Do thy part!  
 Be mindful of thy name, and tremble not!  
 Nought better can betide a martial soul  
 Than lawful war; happy the warrior  
 To whom comes joy of battle — comes, as now,  
 Glorious and fair, unsought; opening for him  
 A gateway unto Heav'n. But, if thou shunn'st  
 This honorable field — a Kshattriya —  
 If, knowing thy duty and thy task, thou bidd'st  
 Duty and task go by — that shall be sin!  
 And those to come shall speak thee infamy  
 From age to age; but infamy is worse  
 For men of noble blood to bear than death!  
 The chiefs upon their battle-chariots  
 Will deem 'twas fear that drove thee from the fray.  
 Of those who held thee mighty-souled the scorn  
 Thou must abide, while all thine enemies  
 Will scatter bitter speech of thee, to mock  
 The valor which thou hadst; what fate could fall  
 More grievously than this? Either — being killed —  
 Thou wilt win Swarga's safety, or — alive  
 And victor — thou wilt reign an earthly king.  
 Therefore, arise, thou Son of Kunti! brace  
 Thine arm for conflict, nerve thy heart to meet —  
 As things alike to thee — pleasure or pain,  
 Profit or ruin, victory or defeat:  
 So minded, gird thee to the fight, for so  
 Thou shalt not sin!

Thus far I speak to thee  
 As from the "Sāṅkhya" — unspiritually —  
 Hear now the deeper teaching of the Yôg,  
 Which holding, understanding, thou shalt burst  
 Thy Karmabandh, the bondage of wrought deeds.  
 Here shall no end be hindered, no hope marred  
 No loss be feared: faith — yea, a little faith —  
 Shall save thee from the anguish of thy dread.  
 Here, Glory of the Kurus! shines one rule —  
 One steadfast rule — while shifting souls have laws  
 Many and hard. Specious, but wrongful deem

The speech of those ill-taught ones who extol  
 The letter of their Vedas, saying, "This  
 Is all we have, or need;" being weak at heart  
 With wants, seekers of Heaven: which comes — they say —  
 As "fruit of good deeds done;" promising men  
 Much profit in new births for works of faith;  
 In various rites abounding; following whereon  
 Large merit shall accrue towards wealth and power;  
 Albeit, who wealth and power do most desire  
 Least fixity of soul have such, least hold  
 On heavenly meditation. Much these teach,  
 From Veds, concerning the "three qualities;"  
 But thou, be free of the "three qualities,"  
 Free of the "pairs of opposites,"<sup>1</sup> and free  
 From that sad righteousness which calculates;  
 Self-ruled, Arjuna! simple, satisfied!<sup>2</sup>  
 Look! like as when a tank pours water forth  
 To suit all needs, so do these Brahmans draw  
 Texts for all wants from tank of Holy Writ.  
 But thou, want not! ask not! Find full reward  
 Of doing right in right! Let right deeds be  
 Thy motive, not the fruit which comes from them.  
 And live in action! Labor! Make thine acts  
 Thy piety, casting all self aside,  
 Contemning gain and merit; equable  
 In good or evil: equability  
 Is Yôg, is piety!

Yet, the right act  
 Is less, far less, than the right-thinking mind.  
 Seek refuge in thy soul; have there thy heaven!  
 Scorn them that follow virtue for her gifts!  
 The mind of pure devotion — even here —  
 Casts equally aside good deeds and bad,  
 Passing above them. Unto pure devotion  
 Devote thyself: with perfect meditation  
 Comes perfect act, and the right-hearted rise —  
 More certainly because they seek no gain —  
 Forth from the bands of body, step by step,  
 To highest seats of bliss. When thy firm soul

<sup>1</sup> Technical phrases of Vedic religion.

<sup>2</sup> The whole of this passage is highly involved and difficult to render.

Hath shaken off those tangled oracles  
 Which ignorantly guide, then shall it soar  
 To high neglect of what's denied or said,  
 This way or that way, in doctrinal writ.  
 Troubled no longer by the priestly lore  
 Safe shall it live, and sure; steadfastly bent  
 On meditation. This is Yôg — and Peace!

**ARJUNA:**

What is his mark who hath that steadfast heart,  
 Confirmed in holy meditation? How  
 Know we his speech, Keśava? Sits he, moves he  
 Like other men?

**KRISHNA:**

When one, O Prithâ's Son! —  
 Abandoning desires which shake the mind —  
 Finds in his soul full comfort for his soul,  
 He hath attained the Yôg — that man is such!  
 In sorrows not dejected, and in joys  
 Not overjoyed; dwelling outside the stress  
 Of passion, fear, and anger; fixed in calms  
 Of lofty contemplation; — such an one  
 Is Muni, is the Sage, the true Recluse!  
 He, who to none and nowhere overbound  
 By ties of flesh, takes evil things and good  
 Neither desponding nor exulting, such  
 Bears wisdom's plainest mark! He who shall draw,  
 As the wise tortoise draws its four feet safe  
 Under its shield, his five frail senses back  
 Under the spirit's buckler from the world  
 Which else assails them, such an one, my Prince!  
 Hath wisdom's mark! Things that solicit sense  
 Hold off from the self-governed; nay, it comes,  
 The appetites of him who lives beyond  
 Depart, — aroused no more. Yet may it chance  
 O Son of Kunti! that a governed mind  
 Shall some time feel the sense-storms sweep, and wrest  
 Strong self-control by the roots. Let him regain  
 His kingdom! let him conquer this, and sit  
 On Me intent. That man alone is wise  
 Who keeps the mastery of himself! If one

Ponders on objects of the sense, there springs  
Attraction; from attraction grows desire,  
Desire flames to fierce passion, passion breeds  
Recklessness; then the memory — all betrayed —  
Lets noble purpose go, and saps the mind,  
Till purpose, mind, and man are all undone.  
But, if one deals with objects of the sense  
Not loving and not hating, making them  
Serve his free soul, which rests serenely lord,  
Lo! such a man comes to tranquillity;  
And out of that tranquillity shall rise  
The end and healing of his earthly pains,  
Since the will governed sets the soul at peace.  
The soul of the ungoverned is not his,  
Nor hath he knowledge of himself; which lacked,  
How grows serenity? and, wanting that  
Whence shall he hope for happiness?

The mind  
That gives itself to follow shows of sense  
Seeth its helm of wisdom rent away,  
And, like a ship in waves of whirlwind, drives  
To wreck and death. Only with him, great Prince!  
Whose senses are not swayed by things of sense —  
Only with him who holds his mastery,  
Shows wisdom perfect. What is midnight-gloom  
To unenlightened souls shines wakeful day  
To his clear gaze; what seems as wakeful day  
Is known for night, thick night of ignorance,  
To his true-seeing eyes. Such is the Saint!

And like the ocean, day by day receiving  
Floods from all lands, which never overflows;  
Its boundary-line not leaping, and not leaving,  
Fed by the rivers, but unswelled by those; —

**So is the perfect one! to his soul's ocean  
The world of sense pours streams of witchery;  
They leave him as they find, without commotion,  
Taking their tribute, but remaining sea.**

**Yea! whoso, shaking off the yoke of flesh,  
Lives lord, not servant, of his lusts; set free**

From pride, from passion, from the sin of "Self,"  
Toucheth tranquillity! O Prithâ's son!  
That is the state of Brahm! There rests no dread  
When that last step is reached! Live where he will,  
Die when he may, such passeth from all 'plaining,  
To blest Nirvâna, with the Gods, attaining.

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER II. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

*Entitled "Sânkhya-Yôg,"*

*The Book of Doctrines."*



### CHAPTER III

ARJUNA:

Thou whom all mortals praise, Janârdana!  
If meditation be a nobler thing  
Than action, wherefore, then, great Kేశava!  
Dost thou impel me to this dreadful fight?  
Now am I by thy doubtful speech disturbed!  
Tell me one thing, and tell me certainly;  
By what road shall I find the better end?

KRISHNA:

I told thee, blameless Lord! there be two paths  
Shown to this world; two schools of wisdom. First  
The Sâṅkhya's, which doth save in way of works  
Prescribed <sup>1</sup> by reason; next, the Yôg, which bids  
Attain by meditation, spiritually:  
Yet these are one! No man shall 'scape from act  
By shunning action; nay, and none shall come  
By mere renouncements unto perfectness.  
Nay, and no jot of time, at any time,  
Rests any actionless; his nature's law  
Compels him, even unwilling, into act;  
[For thought is act in fancy]. He who sits  
Suppressing all the instruments of flesh,  
Yet in his idle heart thinking on them,  
Plays the inept and guilty hypocrite:  
But he who, with strong body serving mind,  
Gives up his mortal powers to worthy work,  
Not seeking gain, Arjuna! such an one  
Is honorable. Do thine allotted task!  
Work is more excellent than idleness;  
The body's life proceeds not, lacking work.  
There is a task of holiness to do,  
Unlike world-binding toil, which bindeth not  
The faithful soul; such earthly duty do  
Free from desire, and thou shalt well perform

<sup>1</sup> I feel convinced *sâṅkhyânân* and *yoginân* must be transposed here in sense.

Thy heavenly purpose. Spake Prajâpati —  
 In the beginning, when all men were made,  
 And, with mankind, the sacrifice — “Do this!  
 Work! sacrifice! Increase and multiply  
 With sacrifice! This shall be Kamadhuk,  
 Your ‘Cow of Plenty,’ giving back her milk  
 Of all abundance. Worship the gods thereby;  
 The gods shall yield ye grace. Those meats ye crave  
 The gods will grant to Labor, when it pays  
 Tithes in the altar-flame. But if one eats  
 Fruits of the earth, rendering to kindly Heaven  
 No gift of toil, that thief steals from his world.”

Who eat of food after their sacrifice  
 Are quit of fault, but they that spread a feast  
 All for themselves, eat sin and drink of sin.  
 By food the living live; food comes of rain,  
 And rain comes by the pious sacrifice,  
 And sacrifice is paid with tithes of toil;  
 Thus action is of Brahmâ, who is One,  
 The Only, All-pervading; at all times  
 Present in sacrifice. He that abstains  
 To help the rolling wheels of this great world,  
 Glutting his idle sense, lives a lost life,  
 Shameful and vain. Existing for himself,  
 Self-concentrated, serving self alone,  
 No part hath he in aught; nothing achieved,  
 Nought wrought or unwrought toucheth him; no hope  
 Of help for all the living things of earth  
 Depends from him.<sup>1</sup> Therefore, thy task prescribed  
 With spirit unattached gladly perform,  
 Since in performance of plain duty man  
 Mounts to his highest bliss. By works alone  
 Janak, and ancient saints reached blessedness!  
 Moreover, for the upholding of thy kind,  
 Action thou should'st embrace. What the wise choose  
 The unwise people take; what best men do  
 The multitude will follow. Look on me,  
 Thou Son of Prithâ! in the three wide worlds  
 I am not bound to any toil, no height

<sup>1</sup> I am doubtful of accuracy here.

Awaits to scale, no gift remains to gain,  
Yet I act here! and, if I acted not —  
Earnest and watchful — those that look to me  
For guidance, sinking back to sloth again  
Because I slumbered, would decline from good,  
And I should break earth's order and commit  
Her offspring unto ruin, Bharata!  
Even as the unknowing toil, wedded to sense,  
So let the enlightened toil, sense-freed, but set  
To bring the world deliverance, and its bliss;  
Not sowing in those simple, busy hearts  
Seed of despair. Yea! let each play his part  
In all he finds to do, with unyoked soul.  
All things are everywhere by Nature wrought  
In interaction of the qualities.  
The fool, cheated by self, thinks, "This I did"  
And "That I wrought;" but — ah, thou strong-armed Prince! —  
A better-lessoned mind, knowing the play  
Of visible things within the world of sense,  
And how the qualities must qualify,  
Standeth aloof even from his acts. Th' untaught  
Live mixed with them, knowing not Nature's way,  
Of highest aims unwitting, slow and dull.  
Those make thou not to stumble, having the light;  
But all thy dues discharging, for My sake,  
With meditation centred inwardly,  
Seeking no profit, satisfied, serene,  
Heedless of issue — fight! They who shall keep  
My ordinance thus, the wise and willing hearts,  
Have quittance from all issue of their acts;  
But those who disregard my ordinance,  
Thinking they know, know nought, and fall to loss,  
Confused and foolish. 'Sooth, the instructed one  
Doth of his kind, following what fits him most;  
And lower creatures of their kind; in vain  
Contending 'gainst the law. Needs must it be  
The objects of the sense will stir the sense  
To like and dislike, yet th' enlightened man  
Yields not to these, knowing them enemies.  
Finally, this is better, that one do  
His own task as he may, even though he fail,  
Than take tasks not his own, though they seem good.

To die performing duty is no ill;  
But who seeks other roads shall wander still.

ARJUNA:

Yet tell me, Teacher! by what force doth man  
Go to his ill, unwilling; as if one  
Pushed him that evil path?

KRISHNA:

Kama it is.

Passion it is! born of the Darknesses,  
Which pusheth him. Mighty of appetite,  
Sinful, and strong is this! — man's enemy!  
As smoke blots the white fire, as clinging rust  
Mars the bright mirror, as the womb surrounds  
The babe unborn, so is the world of things  
Foiled, soiled, enclosed in this desire of flesh.  
The wise fall, caught in it; the unresting foe  
It is of wisdom, wearing countless forms,  
Fair but deceitful, subtle as a flame.  
Sense, mind, and reason — these, O Kunti's son!  
Are booty for it; in its play with these  
It maddens man, beguiling, blinding him.  
Therefore, thou noblest child of Bharata!  
Govern thy heart! Constrain th' entangled sense!  
Resist the false, soft sinfulness which saps  
Knowledge and judgment! Yea, the world is strong,  
But what discerns it stronger, and the mind  
Strongest; and high o'er all the ruling Soul.  
Wherefore, perceiving Him who reigns supreme,  
Put forth full force of Soul in thy own soul!  
Fight! vanquish foes and doubts, dear Hero! slay  
What haunts thee in fond shapes, and would betray!

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER III. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

*Entitled "Karma-Yôg,"*

*Or "The Book of Virtue in Work."*

## CHAPTER IV

**KRISHNA:**

This deathless Yoga, this deep union,  
I taught Vivaswata,<sup>1</sup> the Lord of Light;  
Vivaswata to Manu gave it; he  
To Ikshwâku; so passed it down the line  
Of all my royal Rishis. Then, with years,  
The truth grew dim and perished, noble Prince!  
Now once again to thee it is declared —  
This ancient lore, this mystery supreme —  
Seeing I find thee votary and friend.

**ARJUNA:**

Thy birth, dear Lord, was in these later days,  
And bright Vivaswata's preceded time!  
How shall I comprehend this thing thou sayest,  
"From the beginning it was I who taught?"

**KRISHNA:**

Manifold the renewals of my birth  
Have been, Arjuna! and of thy births, too!  
But mine I know, and thine thou knowest not,  
O Slayer of thy Foes! Albeit I be  
Unborn, undying, indestructible,  
The Lord of all things living; not the less —  
By Maya, by my magic which I stamp  
On floating Nature-forms, the primal vast —  
I come, and go, and come. When Righteousness  
Declines, O Bharata! when Wickedness  
Is strong, I rise, from age to age, and take  
Visible shape, and move a man with men,  
Succoring the good, thrusting the evil back,  
And setting Virtue on her seat again.  
Who knows the truth touching my births on earth  
And my divine work, when he quits the flesh  
Puts on its load no more, falls no more down  
To earthly birth: to Me he comes, dear Prince!

<sup>1</sup> A name of the sun.

Many there be who come from fear set free,  
 From anger, from desire; keeping their hearts  
 Fixed upon me — my Faithful — purified  
 By sacred flame of Knowledge. Such as these  
 Mix with my being. Whoso worship me,  
 Them I exalt; but all men everywhere  
 Shall fall into my path; albeit, those souls  
 Which seek reward for works, make sacrifice  
 Now, to the lower gods. I say to thee  
 Here have they their reward. But I am He  
 Made the Four Castes, and portioned them a place  
 After their qualities and gifts. Yea, I  
 Created, the Reposeful; I that live  
 Immortally, made all those mortal births:  
 For works soil not my essence, being works  
 Wrought uninvolved.<sup>1</sup> Who knows me acting thus  
 Unchained by action, action binds not him;  
 And, so perceiving, all those saints of old  
 Worked, seeking for deliverance. Work thou  
 As, in the days gone by, thy fathers did.

Thou sayst, perplexed, It hath been asked before  
 By singers and by sages, "What is act,  
 And what inaction?" I will teach thee this,  
 And, knowing, thou shalt learn which work doth save.  
 Needs must one rightly meditate those three —  
 Doing, — not doing, — and undoing. Here  
 Thorny and dark the path is! He who sees  
 How action may be rest, rest action — he  
 Is wisest 'mid his kind; he hath the truth!  
 He doeth well, acting or resting. Freed  
 In all his works from prickings of desire,  
 Burned clean in act by the white fire of truth,  
 The wise call that man wise; and such an one,  
 Renouncing fruit of deeds, always content,  
 Always self satisfying, if he works,  
 Doth nothing that shall stain his separate soul,  
 Which — quit of fear and hope — subduing self —  
 Rejecting outward impulse — yielding up  
 To body's need nothing save body, dwells  
 Sinless amid all sin, with equal calm  
 Taking what may befall, by grief unmoved,

<sup>1</sup> Without desire of fruit.

Unmoved by joy, unenvyingly; the same  
In good and evil fortunes; nowise bound  
By bond of deeds. Nay, but of such an one,  
Whose crave is gone, whose soul is liberate,  
Whose heart is set on truth — of such an one  
What work he does is work of sacrifice,  
Which passeth purely into ash and smoke  
Consumed upon the altar! All's then God!  
The sacrifice is Brahm, the ghee and grain  
Are Brahm, the fire is Brahm, the flesh it eats  
Is Brahm, and unto Brahm attaineth he  
Who, in such office, meditates on Brahm.  
Some votaries there be who serve the gods  
With flesh and altar-smoke; but other some  
Who, lighting subtler fires, make purer rite  
With will of worship. Of the which be they  
Who, in white flame of continence, consume  
Joys of the sense, delights of eye and ear,  
Foregoing tender speech and sound of song:  
And they who, kindling fires with torch of Truth,  
Burn on a hidden altar-stone the bliss  
Of youth and love, renouncing happiness:  
And they who lay for offering there their wealth,  
Their penance, meditation, piety,  
Their steadfast reading of the scrolls, their lore  
Painfully gained with long austerities.  
And they who, making silent sacrifice,  
Draw in their breath to feed the flame of thought,  
And breathe it forth to waft the heart on high,  
Governing the ventage of each entering air  
Lest one sigh pass which helpeth not the soul:  
And they who, day by day denying needs,  
Lay life itself upon the altar-flame,  
Burning the body wan. Lo! all these keep  
The rite of offering, as if they slew  
Victims; and all thereby efface much sin.  
Yea! and who feed on the immortal food  
Left of such sacrifice, to Brahma pass,  
To The Unending. But for him that makes  
No sacrifice, he hath nor part nor lot  
Even in the present world. How should he share  
Another, O thou Glory of thy Line?

In sight of Brahma all these offerings  
 Are spread and are accepted! Comprehend  
 That all proceed by act; for knowing this,  
 Thou shalt be quit of doubt. The sacrifice  
 Which Knowledge pays is better than great gifts  
 Offered by wealth, since gifts' worth — O my Prince!  
 Lies in the mind which gives, the will that serves:  
 And these are gained by reverence, by strong search,  
 By humble heed of those who see the Truth  
 And teach it. Knowing Truth, thy heart no more  
 Will ache with error, for the Truth shall show  
 All things subdued to thee, as thou to Me.  
 Moreover, Son of Pandu! wert thou worst  
 Of all wrong-doers, this fair ship of Truth  
 Should bear thee safe and dry across the sea  
 Of thy transgressions. As the kindled flame  
 Feeds on the fuel till it sinks to ash,  
 So unto ash, Arjuna! unto nought  
 The flame of Knowledge wastes works' dross away!  
 There is no purifier like thereto  
 In all this world, and he who seeketh it  
 Shall find it — being grown perfect — in himself.  
 Believing, he receives it when the soul  
 Masters itself, and cleaves to Truth, and comes  
 Possessing knowledge — to the higher peace,  
 The uttermost repose. But those untaught,  
 And those without full faith, and those who fear  
 Are shent; no peace is here or other where,  
 No hope, nor happiness for whoso doubts.  
 He that, being self-contained, hath vanquished doubt,  
 Disparting self from service, soul from works,  
 Enlightened and emancipate, my Prince!  
 Works fetter him no more! Cut then atwain  
 With sword of wisdom, Son of Bharata!  
 This doubt that binds thy heart-beats! cleave the bond  
 Born of thy ignorance! Be bold and wise!  
 Give thyself to the field with me! Arise!

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER IV. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

*Entitled "Jnana-Yôg,"*

*Or "The Book of the Religion of Knowledge."*



## CHAPTER V

ARJUNA:

Yet, Krishna! at the one time thou dost laud  
Surcease of works, and, at another time,  
Service through work. Of these twain plainly tell  
Which is the better way?

KRISHNA:

To cease from works  
Is well, and to do works in holiness  
Is well; and both conduct to bliss supreme;  
But of these twain the better way is his  
Who working piously refraineth not.

That is the true Renouncer, firm and fixed,  
Who — seeking nought, rejecting nought — dwells proof  
Against the “opposites.”<sup>1</sup> O valiant Prince!  
In doing, such breaks lightly from all deed:  
’Tis the new scholar talks as they were two,  
This Sâṅkhya and this Yôga: wise men know  
Who husbands one plucks golden fruit of both!  
The region of high rest which Sâṅkhyans reach  
Yogins attain. Who sees these twain as one  
Sees with clear eyes! Yet such abstraction, Chief!  
Is hard to win without much holiness.  
Whoso is fixed in holiness, self-ruled,  
Pure-hearted, lord of senses and of self,  
Lost in the common life of all which lives —  
A “Yôgayukt” — he is a Saint who wends  
Straightway to Brahm. Such an one is not touched  
By taint of deeds. “Nought of myself I do!”  
’Thus will he think -- who holds the truth of truths --  
In seeing, hearing, touching, smelling; when  
He eats, or goes, or breathes; slumbers or talks,  
Holds fast or loosens, opes his eyes or shuts;  
Always assured “This is the sense-world plays

<sup>1</sup> That is, “joy and sorrow, success and failure, heat and cold,” &c.

With senses." He that acts in thought of Brahm,  
 Detaching end from act, with act content,  
 The world of sense can no more stain his soul  
 Than waters mar th' enamelled lotus-leaf.  
 With life, with heart, with mind, — nay, with the help  
 Of all five senses — letting selfhood go —  
 Yogins toil ever towards their souls' release.  
 Such votaries, renouncing fruit of deeds,  
 Gain endless peace: the un vowed, the passion-bound,  
 Seeking a fruit from works, are fastened down.  
 The embodied sage, withdrawn within his soul,  
 At every act sits godlike in "the town  
 Which hath nine gateways,"<sup>1</sup> neither doing aught  
 Nor causing any deed. This world's Lord makes  
 Neither the work, nor passion for the work,  
 Nor lust for fruit of work; the man's own self  
 Pushes to these! The Master of this World  
 Takes on himself the good or evil deeds  
 Of no man — dwelling beyond! Mankind errs here  
 By folly, darkening knowledge. But, for whom  
 That darkness of the soul is chased by light,  
 Splendid and clear shines manifest the Truth  
 As if a Sun of Wisdom sprang to shed  
 Its beams of dawn. Him meditating still,  
 Him seeking, with Him blended, stayed on Him,  
 The souls illuminated take that road  
 Which hath no turning back — their sins flung off  
 By strength of faith. [Who will may have this Light;  
 Who hath it sees.] To him who wisely sees,  
 The Brahman with his scrolls and sanctities,  
 The cow, the elephant, the unclean dog,  
 The Outcast gorging dog's meat, are all one.

The world is overcome — aye! even here!  
 By such as fix their faith on Unity.  
 The sinless Brahma dwells in Unity,  
 And they in Brahma. Be not over-glad  
 Attaining joy, and be not over-sad  
 Encountering grief, but, stayed on Brahma, still  
 Constant let each abide! The sage whose soul

<sup>1</sup> I. e., the body.

Holds off from outer contacts, in himself  
 Finds bliss; to Brahma joined by piety,  
 His spirit tastes eternal peace. 'The joys  
 Springing from sense-life are but quickening wombs  
 Which breed sure griefs: those joys begin and end!  
 The wise mind takes no pleasure, Kunti's Son!  
 In such as those! But if a man shall learn,  
 Even while he lives and bears his body's chain,  
 To master lust and anger, he is blest!  
 He is the *Yukta*; he hath happiness,  
 Contentment, light, within: his life is merged  
 In Brahma's life; he doth Nirvâna touch!  
 Thus go the Rishis unto rest, who dwell  
 With sins effaced, with doubts at end, with hearts  
 Governed and calm. Glad in all good they live,  
 Nigh to the peace of God; and all those live  
 Who pass their days exempt from greed and wrath,  
 Subduing self and senses, knowing the Soul!

The Saint who shuts outside his placid soul  
 All touch of sense, letting no contact through;  
 Whose quiet eyes gaze straight from fixed brows,  
 Whose outward breath and inward breath are drawn  
 Equal and slow through nostrils still and close;  
 That one — with organs, heart, and mind constrained,  
 Bent on deliverance, having put away  
 Passion, and fear, and rage; — hath, even now,  
 Obtained deliverance, ever and ever freed.  
 Yea! for he knows Me Who am He that heeds  
 The sacrifice and worship, God revealed;  
 And He who heeds not, being Lord of Worlds,  
 Lover of all that lives, God unrevealed,  
 Wherein who will shall find surety and shield!

HERE ENDS CHAPTER V. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

Entitled "*Karmasanyâsayog*,"

Or "*The Book of Religion by Renouncing Fruit of Works.*"

## CHAPTER VI

**KRISHNA:**

Therefore, who doeth work rightful to do,  
Not seeking gain from work, that man, O Prince!  
Is Sānyasi and Yôgi — both in one!  
And he is neither who lights not the flame  
Of sacrifice, nor setteth hand to task.

Regard as true Renouncer him that makes  
Worship by work, for who renounceth not  
Works not as Yôgin. So is that well said  
“By works the votary doth rise to saint,  
And saintship is the ceasing from all works;”  
Because the perfect Yôgin acts — but acts  
Unmoved by passions and unbound by deeds,  
Setting result aside.

Let each man raise  
The Self by Soul, not trample down his Self,  
Since Soul that is Self's friend may grow Self's foe.  
Soul is Self's friend when Self doth rule o'er Self,  
But Self turns enemy if Soul's own self  
Hates Self as not itself.<sup>1</sup>

The sovereign soul  
Of him who lives self-governed and at peace  
Is centred in itself, taking alike  
Pleasure and pain; heat, cold; glory and shame.  
He is the Yôgi, he is *Yûkta*, glad  
With joy of light and truth; dwelling apart  
Upon a peak, with senses subjugate  
Whereto the clod, the rock, the glistening gold  
Show all as one. By this sign is he known  
Being of equal grace to comrades, friends,  
Chance-comers, strangers, lovers, enemies,  
Aliens and kinsmen; loving all alike,  
Evil or good.

<sup>1</sup> The Sanskrit has this play on the double meaning of *Ātman*.

Sequestered should he sit,  
 Steadfastly meditating, solitary,  
 His thoughts controlled, his passions laid away,  
 Quit of belongings. In a fair, still spot  
 Having his fixed abode, — not too much raised,  
 Nor yet too low, — let him abide, his goods  
 A cloth, a deerskin, and the Kuśa-grass.  
 There, setting hard his mind upon The One,  
 Restraining heart and senses, silent, calm,  
 Let him accomplish Yôga, and achieve  
 Pureness of soul, holding immovable  
 Body and neck and head, his gaze absorbed  
 Upon his nose-end,<sup>1</sup> rapt from all around.  
 Tranquil in spirit, free of fear, intent  
 Upon his Brahmacharya vow, devout,  
 Musing on Me, lost in the thought of Me.  
 That Yôgin, so devoted, so controlled,  
 Comes to the peace beyond, — My peace, the peace  
 Of high Nirvana!

But for earthly needs  
 Religion is not his who too much fasts  
 Or too much feasts, nor his who sleeps away  
 An idle mind; nor his who wears to waste  
 His strength in vigils. Nay, Arjuna! call  
 That the true piety which most removes  
 Earth-aches and ills, where one is moderate  
 In eating and in resting, and in sport;  
 Measured in wish and act; sleeping betimes,  
 Waking betimes for duty.

When the man,  
 So living, centres on his soul the thought  
 Straitly restrained — untouched internally  
 By stress of sense — then is he *lâkta*. See!  
 Steadfast a lamp burns sheltered from the wind;  
 Such is the likeness of the Yôgi's mind  
 Shut from sense-storms and burning bright to Heaven.  
 When mind broods placid, soothed with holy wont;  
 When Self contemplates self, and in itself  
 Hath comfort; when it knows the nameless joy  
 Beyond all scope of sense, revealed to soul --

<sup>1</sup> So in original.

Only to soul! and, knowing, wavers not,  
 True to the farther Truth; when, holding this,  
 It deems no other treasure comparable,  
 But, harbored there, cannot be stirred or shook  
 By any gravest grief, call that state "peace,"  
 That happy severance Yôga; call that man  
 The perfect Yôgin'

Steadfastly the will  
 Must toil thereto, till efforts end in ease,  
 And thought has passed from thinking. Shaking off  
 All longings bred by dreams of fame and gain,  
 Shutting the doorways of the senses close  
 With watchful ward; so, step by step, it comes  
 To gift of peace assured and heart assuaged,  
 When the mind dwells self-wrapped, and the soul broods  
 Cumberless. But, as often as the heart  
 Breaks — wild and wavering — from control, so oft  
 Let him re-curb it, let him rein it back  
 To the soul's governance; for perfect bliss  
 Grows only in the bosom tranquillized,  
 The spirit passionless, purged from offence,  
 Vowed to the Infinite. He who thus vows  
 His soul to the Supreme Soul, quitting sin,  
 Passes unhindered to the endless bliss  
 Of unity with Brahma. He so vowed,  
 So blended, sees the Life-Soul resident  
 In all things living, and all living things  
 In that Life-Soul contained. And whoso thus  
 Discerneth Me in all, and all in Me,  
 I never let him go; nor looseneth he  
 Hold upon Me; but, dwell he where he may,  
 Whate'er his life, in Me he dwells and lives,  
 Because he knows and worships Me, Who dwell  
 In all which lives, and cleaves to Me in all.  
 Arjuna! if a man sees everywhere —  
 Taught by his own similitude -- one Life,  
 One Essence in the Evil and the Good,  
 Hold him a Yôgi, yea! well-perfected!

ARJUNA:

Slayer of Madhu! yet again, this Yôg,  
 This Peace, derived from equanimity.

Made known by thee — I see no fixity  
Therein, no rest, because the heart of men  
Is unfixed, Krishna! rash, tumultuous,  
Wilful and strong. 'T were all one, I think,  
To hold the wayward wind, as tame man's heart.

KRISHNA:

Hero long-armed! beyond denial, hard  
Man's heart is to restrain, and wavering;  
Yet may it grow restrained by habit, Prince!  
By wont of self-command. This Yôg, I say,  
Cometh not lightly to th' ungoverned ones;  
But he who will be master of himself  
Shall win it, if he stoutly strive thereto.

ARJUNA:

And what road goeth he who, having faith,  
Fails, Krishna! in the striving; falling back  
From holiness, missing the perfect rule?  
Is he not lost, straying from Brahma's light,  
Like the vain cloud, which floats 'twixt earth and Heaven  
When lightning splits it, and it vanisheth?  
Fain would I hear thee answer me herein,  
Since, Krishna! none save thou can clear the doubt.

KRISHNA:

He is not lost, thou Son of Prithâ! No!  
Nor earth, nor heaven is forfeit, even for him,  
Because no heart that holds one right desire  
Treadeth the road of loss! He who should fail,  
Desiring righteousness, cometh at death  
Unto the Region of the Just; dwells there  
Measureless years, and being born anew,  
Beginneth life again in some fair home  
Amid the mild and happy. It may chance  
He doth descend into a Yôgin house  
On Virtue's breast; but that is rare! Such birth  
Is hard to be obtained on this earth, Chief!  
So hath he back again what heights of heart  
He did achieve, and so he strives anew  
To perfectness, with better hope, dear Prince!

For by the old desire he is drawn on  
 Unwittingly; and only to desire  
 The purity of Yôga is to pass  
 Beyond the *Sabdabrahm*, the spoken Ved.  
 But, being Yôgi, striving strong and long,  
 Purged from transgressions, perfected by births  
 Following on births, he plants his feet at last  
 Upon the farther path. Such an one ranks  
 Above ascetics, higher than the wise,  
 Beyond achievers of vast deeds! Be thou  
 Yôgi, Arjuna! And of such believe,  
 Truest and best is he who worships Me  
 With inmost soul, stayed on My Mystery!

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER VI. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

*Entitled "Atmasanyamayôg,"*

*Or "The Book of Religion by Self-Restraint."*



## CHAPTER VII

**KRISHNA:**

Learn now, dear Prince! how, if thy soul be set  
Ever on Me — still exercising Yôg,  
Still making Me thy Refuge — thou shalt come  
Most surely unto perfect hold of Me.  
I will declare to thee that utmost lore,  
Whole and particular, which, when thou knowest,  
Leaveth no more to know here in this world.

Of many thousand mortals, one, perchance,  
Striveth for Truth; and of those few that strive —  
Nay, and rise high — one only — here and there —  
Knoweth Me, as I am, the very Truth.

Earth, water, flame, air, ether, life, and mind,  
And individuality — those eight  
Make up the showing of Me, Manifest.

These be my lower Nature; learn the higher,  
Whereby, thou Valiant One! this Universe  
Is, by its principle of life, produced;  
Whereby the worlds of visible things are born  
As from a *Yoni*. Know! I am that womb.  
I make and I unmake this Universe:  
Than me there is no other Master, Prince!  
No other Maker! All these hang on me  
As hangs a row of pearls upon its string.  
I am the fresh taste of the water; I  
The silver of the moon, the gold o' the sun,  
The word of worship in the Ved, the thrill  
That passeth in the ether, and the strength  
Of man's shed seed. I am the good sweet smell  
Of the moistened earth, I am the fire's red light,  
The vital air moving in all which moves,  
The holiness of hallowed souls, the root  
Undying, whence hath sprung whatever is;  
The wisdom of the wise, the intellect

Of the informed, the greatness of the great,  
 The splendor of the splendid. Kunti's Son!  
 These am I, free from passion and desire;  
 Yet am I right desire in all who yearn,  
 Chief of the Bhâratas! for all those moods,  
 Soothfast, or passionate, or ignorant,  
 Which Nature frames, deduce from me; but all  
 Are merged in me — not I in them! The world —  
 Deceived by those three qualities of being —  
 Wotteth not Me Who am outside them all,  
 Above them all, Eternal! Hard it is  
 To pierce that veil divine of various shows  
 Which hideth Me; yet they who worship Me  
 Pierce it and pass beyond.

I am not known

To evil-doers, nor to foolish ones,  
 Nor to the base and churlish; nor to those  
 Whose mind is cheated by the show of things,  
 Nor those that take the way of Asuras.<sup>1</sup>

Four sorts of mortals know me: he who weeps,  
 Arjuna! and the man who yearns to know;  
 And he who toils to help; and he who sits  
 Certain of me, enlightened.

Of these four,

O Prince of India! highest, nearest, best  
 That last is, the devout soul, wise, intent  
 Upon "The One." Dear, above all, am I  
 To him; and he is dearest unto me!  
 All four are good, and seek me; but mine own,  
 The true of heart, the faithful — stayed on me,  
 Taking me as their utmost blessedness,  
 They are not "mine," but I — even I myself!  
 At end of many births to Me they come!  
 Yet hard the wise Mahatma is to find,  
 That man who sayeth, "All is Vâsudev!"<sup>2</sup>

There be those, too, whose knowledge, turned aside  
 By this desire or that, gives them to serve  
 Some lower gods, with various rites, constrained  
 By that which mouldeth them. Unto all such —

<sup>1</sup> Beings of low and devilish nature.

<sup>2</sup> Krishna.

Worship what shrine they will, what shapes, in faith —  
 'Tis I who give them faith! I am content!  
 The heart thus asking favor from its God,  
 Darkened but ardent, hath the end it craves,  
 The lesser blessing — but 'tis I who give!  
 Yet soon is withered what small fruit they reap:  
 Those men of little minds, who worship so,  
 Go where they worship, passing with their gods.  
 But Mine come unto me! Blind are the eyes  
 Which deem th' Unmanifested manifest,  
 Not comprehending Me in my true Self!  
 Imperishable, viewless, undeclared,  
 Hidden behind my magic veil of shows,  
 I am not seen by all; I am not known —  
 Unborn and changeless — to the idle world.  
 But I, Arjuna! know all things which were,  
 And all which are, and all which are to be,  
 Albeit not one among them knoweth Me!

By passion for the "pairs of opposites,"  
 By those twain snares of Like and Dislike, Prince!  
 All creatures live bewildered, save some few  
 Who, quit of sins, holy in act, informed,  
 Freed from the "opposites." and fixed in faith,  
 Cleave unto Me.

Who cleave, who seek in Me  
 Refuge from birth <sup>1</sup> and death, those have the Truth!  
 Those know Me BRAHMA; know Me Soul of Souls,  
 The ADHYÂTMAN; know KARMA, my work;  
 Know I am ADHIBHÛTA, Lord of Life,  
 And ADHIDAIVA, Lord of all the Gods  
 And ADHIYAJNA, Lord of Sacrifice;  
 Worship Me well, with hearts of love and faith,  
 And find and hold Me in the hour of death.

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER VII. OF THE  
 BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

*Entitled "Vijnânayôg,"*  
*Or "The Book of Religion by Discernment."*

<sup>1</sup> I read here *janma*, "birth;" not *jara*, "age."

## CHAPTER VIII

**ARJUNA:**

Who is that **BRAHMA**? What that Soul of Souls,  
The **ADHYÂTMAN**? What, Thou Best of All!  
Thy work, the **KARMA**? Tell me what it is  
Thou namest **ADHIBHÛTA**? What again  
Means **ADHIDAIVA**? Yea, and how it comes  
Thou canst be **ADHIYAJNA** in thy flesh?  
Slayer of Madhu! Further, make me know  
How good men find thee in the hour of death?

**KRISHNA:**

I **BRAHMA** am! the One Eternal God,  
And **ADHYÂTMAN** is My Being's name,  
The Soul of Souls! What goeth forth from Me,  
Causing all life to live, is **KARMA** called:  
And, Manifested in divided forms,  
I am the **ADHIBHÛTA**, Lord of Lives;  
And **ADHIDAIVA**, Lord of all the Gods,  
Because I am **PURUSHA**, who begets.  
And **ADHIYAJNA**, Lord of Sacrifice,  
I — speaking with thee in this body here —  
Am, thou embodied one! (for all the shrines  
Flame unto Me!) And, at the hour of death,  
He that hath meditated Me alone,  
In putting off his flesh, comes forth to Me,  
Enters into My Being — doubt thou not!  
But, if he meditated otherwise  
At hour of death, in putting off the flesh,  
He goes to what he looked for, Kunti's Son!  
Because the Soul is fashioned to its like.

Have Me, then, in thy heart always! and fight!  
Thou too, when heart and mind are fixed on Me,  
Shalt surely come to Me! All come who cleave  
With never-wavering will of firmest faith,  
Owning none other Gods: all come to Me,  
The Uttermost, Purusha, Holiest!

Whoso hath known Me, Lord of sage and singer,  
Ancient of days; of all the Three Worlds Stay,  
Boundless, — but unto every atom Bringer  
Of that which quickens it: whoso, I say,

Hath known My form, which passeth mortal knowing;  
Seen my effulgence — which no eye hath seen —  
Than the sun's burning gold more brightly glowing,  
Dispersing darkness, — unto him hath been

Right life! And, in the hour when life is ending,  
With mind set fast and trustful piety,  
Drawing still breath beneath calm brows unbending,  
In happy peace that faithful one doth die, —

In glad peace passeth to Purusha's heaven,  
The place which they who read the Vedas name  
AKSHARAM, "Ultimate;" whereto have striven  
Saints and ascetics -- their road is the same.

That way -- the highest way — goes he who shuts  
The gates of all his senses, locks desire  
Safe in his heart, centres the vital airs  
Upon his parting thought, steadfastly set;  
And, murmuring OM, the sacred syllable —  
Emblem of BRAHM — dies, meditating Me.

For who, none other Gods regarding, looks  
Ever to Me, easily am I gained  
By such a Yôgi; and, attaining Me,  
They fall not — those Mahatmas — back to birth,  
To life, which is the place of pain, which ends,  
But take the way of utmost blessedness.

The worlds, Arjuna! — even Brahma's world —  
Roll back again from Death to Life's unrest;  
But they, O Kunti's Son! that reach to Me,  
Taste birth no more. If ye know Brahma's Day  
Which is a thousand Yugas; if ye know  
The thousand Yugas making Brahma's Night,  
Then know ye Day and Night as He doth know!  
When that vast Dawn doth break, th' Invisible

Is brought anew into the Visible;  
 When that deep Night doth darken, all which is  
 Fades back again to Him Who sent it forth;  
 Yea! this vast company of living things —  
 Again and yet again produced — expires  
 At Brahma's Nightfall; and, at Brahma's Dawn,  
 Riseth, without its will, to life new-born.  
 But — higher, deeper, innermost — abides  
 Another Life, not like the life of sense,  
 Escaping sight, unchanging. This endures  
 When all created things have passed away;  
 This is that Life named the Unmanifest,  
 The Infinite! the All! the Uttermost.  
 Thither arriving none return. That Life  
 Is Mine, and I am there! And, Prince! by faith  
 Which wanders not, there is a way to come  
 Thither. I, the PURUSHA, I Who spread  
 The Universe around me — in Whom dwell  
 All living Things — may so be reached and seen!

Richer than holy fruit on Vedas growing,  
 Greater than gifts, better than prayer or fast,  
 Such wisdom is! The Yôgi, this way knowing,  
 Comes to the Utmost Perfect Peace at last.

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER VIII. OF THE

ĀBHĀGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

*Entitled "Aksharaparabrahmayôg,"*

*Or "The Book of Religion by Devotion to the One Supreme God."*

<sup>1</sup> I have discarded ten lines of Sanskrit text here as an undoubted interpolation by some Vedantist.

## CHAPTER IX

**KRISHNA:**

Now will I open unto thee — whose heart  
Rejects not — that last lore, deepest-concealed,  
That farthest secret of My Heavens and Earths,  
Which but to know shall set thee free from ills, —  
A Royal lore! a Kingly mystery!  
Yea! for the soul such light as purgeth it  
From every sin; a light of holiness  
With inmost splendor shining; plain to see;  
Easy to walk by, inexhaustible!

They that receive not this, failing in faith  
To grasp the greater wisdom, reach not Me,  
Destroyer of thy foes! They sink anew  
Into the realm of Flesh, where all things change!

By Me the whole vast Universe of things  
Is spread abroad; — by Me, the Unmanifest!  
In Me are all existences contained;  
Not I in them!

Yet they are not contained,  
Those visible things! Receive and strive to embrace  
The mystery majestic! My Being —  
Creating all, sustaining all — still dwells  
Outside of all!

See! as the shoreless airs  
Move in the measureless space, but are not space,  
[And space were space without the moving airs];  
So all things are in Me, but are not I.

At closing of each Kalpa, Indian Prince!  
All things which be back to My Being come:  
At the beginning of each Kalpa, all  
Issue new-born from Me.

## By Energy

And help of Prakriti, my outer Self,  
 Again, and yet again, I make go forth  
 The realms of visible things — without their will —  
 All of them — by the power of Prakriti.

Yet these great makings, Prince! involve Me not,  
 Enchain Me not! I sit apart from them,  
 Other, and Higher, and Free; nowise attached!

Thus doth the stuff of worlds, moulded by Me,  
 Bring forth all that which is, moving or still,  
 Living or lifeless! Thus the worlds go on!

The minds untaught mistake Me, veiled in form; —  
 Nought see they of My secret Presence, nought  
 Of My hid Nature, ruling all which lives.  
 Vain hopes pursuing, vain deeds doing; fed  
 On vainest knowledge, senselessly they seek  
 An evil way, the way of brutes and fiends.  
 But My Mahatmas, those of noble soul  
 Who tread the path celestial, worship Me  
 With hearts unwandering, — knowing Me the Source,  
 Th' Eternal Source, of Life. Unendingly  
 They glorify Me; seek Me; keep their vows  
 Of reverence and love, with changeless faith  
 Adoring Me. Yea, and those too adore,  
 Who, offering sacrifice of wakened hearts,  
 Have sense of one pervading Spirit's stress,  
 One Force in every place, though manifold!  
 I am the Sacrifice! I am the Prayer!  
 I am the Funeral-Cake set for the dead!  
 I am the healing herb! I am the ghee,  
 The Mantra, and the flame, and that which burns!  
 I am — of all this boundless Universe —  
 The Father, Mother, Ancestor, and Guard!  
 The end of Learning! That which purifies  
 In lustral water! I am Om! I am  
 Rig-Veda, Sama-Veda, Yajur-Ved;  
 The Way, the Fosterer, the Lord, the Judge,  
 The Witness; the Abode, the Refuge-House,  
 The Friend, the Fountain and the Sea of Life



Which sends, and swallows up; Treasure of Worlds  
And Treasure-Chamber! Seed and Seed-Sower,  
Whence endless harvests spring! Sun's heat is mine;  
Heaven's rain is mine to grant or to withhold;  
Death am I, and Immortal Life I am,  
Arjuna! SAT and ASAT, Visible Life,  
And Life Invisible!

Yea! those who learn  
The threefold Veds, who drink the Soma-wine,  
Purge sins, pay sacrifice — from Me they earn  
Passage to Swarga; where the meats divine  
Of great gods feed them in high Indra's heaven.  
Yet they, when that prodigious joy is o'er,  
Paradise spent, and wage for merits given,  
Come to the world of death and change once more.

They had their recompense! they stored their treasure,  
Following the threefold Scripture and its writ;  
Who seeketh such gaineth the fleeting pleasure  
Of joy which comes and goes! I grant them it!

But to those blessed ones who worship Me,  
Turning not elsewhere, with minds set fast,  
I bring assurance of full bliss beyond.

Nay, and of hearts which follow other gods  
In simple faith, their prayers arise to me,  
O Kunti's Son! though they pray wrongfully;  
For I am the Receiver and the Lord  
Of every sacrifice, which these know not  
Rightfully; so they fall to earth again!  
Who follow gods go to their gods; who vow  
Their souls to Pitris go to Pitris; minds  
To evil Bhûts given o'er sink to the Bhûts;  
And whoso loveth Me cometh to Me.  
Whoso shall offer Me in faith and love  
A leaf, a flower, a fruit, water poured forth,  
That offering I accept, lovingly made  
With pious will. Whate'er thou doest, Prince!  
Eating or sacrificing, giving gifts,  
Praying or fasting, let it all be done

For Me, as Mine. So shalt thou free thyself  
 From *Karmabandh*, the chain which holdeth men  
 To good and evil issue, so shalt come  
 Safe unto Me — when thou art quit of flesh ---  
 By faith and abdication joined to Me!

I am alike for all! I know not hate,  
 I know not favor! What is made is Mine!  
 But them that worship Me with love, I love;  
 They are in Me, and I in them!

Nay, Prince!

If one of evil life turn in his thought  
 Straightly to Me, count him amidst the good;  
 He hath the high way chosen; he shall grow  
 Righteous ere long; he shall attain that peace  
 Which changes not. Thou Prince of India!  
 Be certain none can perish, trusting Me!  
 O Prithâ's Son! whoso will turn to Me,  
 Though they be born from the very womb of Sin,  
 Woman or man; sprung of the *Vaiśya* caste  
 Or lowly disregarded *Sudra*, — all  
 Plant foot upon the highest path; how then  
 The holy *Brahmans* and My Royal Saints?  
 Ah! ye who into this ill world are come —  
 Fleeting and false — set your faith fast on Me!  
 Fix heart and thought on Me! Adore Me! Bring  
 Offerings to Me! Make Me prostrations! Make  
 Me your supremest joy! and, undivided,  
 Unto My rest your spirits shall be guided.

HERE ENDS CHAPTER IX. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

*Entitled "Râjavidyârajaguhya-yôg,"*

*Or "The Book of Religion by the Kingly Knowledge and the  
 Kingly Mystery."*

## CHAPTER X

KRISHNA: <sup>1</sup>

Hear farther yet, thou Long-Armed Lord! these latest words I say --  
Uttered to bring thee bliss and peace, who lovest Me alway --  
Not the great company of gods nor kingly Rishis know  
My Nature, Who have made the gods and Rishis long ago;  
He only knoweth -- only he is free of sin, and wise,  
Who seeth Me, Lord of the Worlds, with faith-enlightened eyes,  
Unborn, undying, unbegin. Whatever Natures be  
To mortal men distributed, those natures spring from Me!  
Intellect, skill, enlightenment, endurance, self-control,  
Truthfulness, equability, and grief or joy of soul,  
And birth and death, and fearfulness, and fearlessness, and shame,  
And honor, and sweet harmlessness,<sup>2</sup> and peace which is the same  
Whate'er befalls, and mirth, and tears, and piety, and thrift,  
And wish to give, and will to help, -- all cometh of My gift!  
The seven Chief Saints, the Elders Four, the Lordly Manus set --  
Sharing My work -- to rule the worlds, these too did I beget;  
And Rishis, Pitris, Manus, all, by one thought of My mind;  
Thence did arise, to fill this world, the races of mankind;  
Wherefrom who comprehends My Reign of mystic Majesty --  
That truth of truths -- is thenceforth linked in faultless faith to Me:  
Yea! knowing Me the source of all, by Me all creatures wrought,  
The wise in spirit cleave to Me, into My Being brought;  
Hearts fixed on Me; breaths breathed to Me; praising Me, each to each,  
So have they happiness and peace, with pious thought and speech;  
And unto these -- thus serving well, thus loving ceaselessly --  
I give a mind of perfect mood, whereby they draw to Me;  
And, all for love of them, within their darkened souls I dwell,  
And, with bright rays of wisdom's lamp, their ignorance dispel.

ARJUNA:

Yes! Thou art Parabrahm! The High Abode!  
The Great Purification! Thou art God  
Eternal, All-creating, Holy, First,

<sup>1</sup> The Sanskrit poem here rises to an elevation of style and manner which I have endeavored to mark by change of metre.

<sup>2</sup> Ahimsā.

Without beginning! Lord of Lords and Gods!  
 Declared by all the Saints — by Narada,  
 Vyāsa, Asita, and Devala;  
 And here Thyself declaring unto me!  
 What Thou hast said now know I to be truth,  
 O Keśava! that neither gods nor men  
 Nor demons comprehend Thy mystery  
 Made manifest, Divinest! Thou Thyself  
 Thyself alone dost know, Maker Supreme!  
 Master of all the living! Lord of Gods!  
 King of the Universe! To Thee alone  
 Belongs to tell the heavenly excellence  
 Of those perfections wherewith Thou dost fill  
 These worlds of Thine; Pervading, Immanent!  
 How shall I learn, Supreme Mystery!  
 To know Thee, though I muse continually?  
 Under what form of Thine unnumbered forms  
 Mayst Thou be grasped? Ah! yet again recount,  
 Clear and complete, Thy great appearances,  
 The secrets of Thy Majesty and Might,  
 Thou High Delight of Men! Never enough  
 Can mine ears drink the Amrit <sup>1</sup> of such words!

KRISENA:

*Hanta!* So be it! Kuru Prince! I will to thee unfold  
 Some portions of My Majesty, whose powers are manifold!  
 I am the Spirit seated deep in every creature's heart;  
 From Me they come; by Me they live; at My word they depart!  
 Vishnu of the Ādityas I am, those Lords of Light;  
 Maritchi of the Maruts, the Kings of Storm and Blight;  
 By day I gleam, the golden Sun of burning cloudless Noon;  
 By Night, amid the asterisms I glide, the dappled Moon!  
 Of Vedas I am Sāma-Ved, of gods in Indra's Heaven  
 Vāsava; of the faculties to living beings given  
 The mind which apprehends and thinks; of Rudras Śankara;  
 Of Yakshas and of Rākshasas, Vittesh; and Pāvaka  
 Of Vasus, and of mountain-peaks Meru; Vrihaspati  
 Know Me 'mid planetary Powers; 'mid Warriors heavenly  
 Skanda; of all the water-floods the Sea which drinketh each,  
 And Bhṛigu of the holy Saints, and Om of sacred speech;

<sup>1</sup> The nectar of immortality.

Of prayers the prayer ye whisper; <sup>1</sup> of hills Himāla's snow,  
 And Aswattha, the fig-tree, of all the trees that grow;  
 Of the Devarshis, Narada; and Chitrarath of them  
 That sing in Heaven, and Kapila of Munis, and the gem  
 Of flying steeds, Uchchaisravas, from Amrit-wave which burst;  
 Of elephants Airāvata; of males the Best and First;  
 Of weapons Heav'n's hot thunderbolt; of cows white Kāmadhuk,  
 From whose great milky udder-teats all hearts' desires are strook;  
 Vāsuki of the serpent-tribes, round Mandara entwined;  
 And thousand-fanged Ananta, on whose broad coils reclined  
 Leans Vishnu; and of water-things Varuna; Aryam  
 Of Pitris, and, of those that judge, Yama the Judge I am;  
 Of Daityas dread Prahlāda; of what metes days and years,  
 Time's self I am; of woodland-beasts — buffaloes, deers, and bears —  
 The lordly-painted tiger; of birds the vast Garūd,  
 The whirlwind 'mid the winds; 'mid chiefs Rama with blood imbrued,  
 Makar 'mid fishes of the sea, and Ganges 'mid the streams;  
 Yea! First, and Last, and Centre of all which is or seems  
 I am, Arjuna! Wisdom Supreme of what is wise,  
 Words on the uttering lips I am, and eyesight of the eyes,  
 And "A" of written characters, Dwandwa <sup>2</sup> of knitted speech,  
 And Endless Life, and boundless Love, whose power sustaineth each;  
 And bitter Death which seizes all, and joyous sudden Birth,  
 Which brings to light all beings that are to be on earth;  
 And of the viewless virtues, Fame, Fortune, Song am I,  
 And Memory, and Patience; and Craft, and Constancy:  
 Of Vedic hymns the Vrihatsām, of metres Gayatrī,  
 Of months the Mārgasirsha, of all the seasons three  
 The flower-wreathed Spring; in dicer's play the conquering Double-Eight;  
 The splendor of the splendid, and the greatness of the great,  
 Victory I am, and Action! and the goodness of the good,  
 And Vāsudev of Vrishni's race, and of this Pandu brood  
 Thyself! — Yea, my Arjuna! thyself; for thou art Mine!  
 Of poets Uśana, of saints Vyāsa, sage divine;  
 The policy of conquerors, the potency of kings,  
 The great unbroken silence in learning's secret things;  
 The lore of all the learnèd, the seed of all which springs.]  
 Living or lifeless, still or stirred, whatever beings be,  
 None of them is in all the worlds, but it exists by Me!  
 Nor tongue can tell, Arjuna! nor end of telling come

<sup>1</sup> Called "The Jap."

<sup>2</sup> The compound form of Sanskrit words.

Of these My boundless glories, whereof I teach thee some;  
For wheresoe'er is wondrous work, and majesty, and might,  
From Me hath all proceeded. Receive thou this aright!  
Yet how shouldst thou receive, O Prince! the vastness of this word?  
I, who am all, and made it all, abide its separate Lord!

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER X. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

*Entitled "Vibhuti Yôg,"*

*Or "The Book of Religion by the Heavenly Perfections."*

## CHAPTER XI

ARJUNA:

This, for my soul's peace, have I heard from Thee,  
The unfolding of the Mystery Supreme  
Named Adhyâtman; comprehending which,  
My darkness is dispelled; for now I know —  
O Lotus-eyed! <sup>1</sup> — whence is the birth of men,  
And whence their death, and what the majesties  
Of thine immortal rule. Fain would I see,  
As thou Thyself declar'st it, Sovereign Lord!  
The likeness of that glory of Thy Form  
Wholly revealed. O Thou Divinest One!  
If this can be, if I may bear the sight,  
Make Thyself visible, Lord of all prayers!  
Show me Thy very self, the Eternal God!

KRISHNA:

Gaze, then, thou Son of Prithâ! I manifest for thee  
Those hundred thousand thousand shapes that clothe my Mystery:  
I show thee all my semblances, infinite, rich, divine,  
My changeful hues, my countless forms. See! in this face of mine,  
Âdityas, Vasus, Rudras, Aświns, and Maruts; see  
Wonders unnumbered, Indian Prince! revealed to none save thee.  
Behold! this is the Universe! — Look! what is live and dead  
I gather all in one — in Me! Gaze, as thy lips have said,  
On GOD ETERNAL, VERY GOD! See ME! see what thou prayest!

Thou canst not! — nor, with human eyes, Arjuna! ever mayest!  
Therefore I give thee sense divine. Have other eyes, new light!  
And, look! This is My glory, unveiled to mortal sight!

SANJAYA:

Then, O King! the God, so saying,  
Stood, to Prithâ's Son displaying  
All the splendor, wonder, dread

<sup>1</sup> "KamalapatrAksha."

Of His vast Almighty-head.  
 Out of countless eyes beholding,  
 Out of countless mouths commanding,  
 Countless mystic forms enfolding  
 In one Form: supremely standing  
 Countless radiant glories wearing,  
 Countless heavenly weapons bearing,  
 Crowned with garlands of star-clusters,  
 Robed in garb of woven lustres,  
 Breathing from His perfect Presence  
 Breaths of all delicious essence  
 Of all sweetest odors; shedding  
 Blinding brilliance, overspreading —  
 Boundless, beautiful — all spaces  
 From His all-regarding faces;  
 So He showed! If there should rise  
 Suddenly within the skies  
 Sunburst of a thousand suns  
 Flooding earth with rays undecreed-of,  
 Then might be that Holy One's  
 Majesty and glory dreamed of!

So did Pandu's Son behold  
 All this universe enfold  
 All its huge diversity  
 Into one great shape, and be  
 Visible, and viewed, and blended  
 In one Body — subtle, splendid,  
 Nameless — th' All-comprehending  
 God of Gods, the Never-Ending  
 Deity!

But, sore amazed,  
 Thrilled, o'erfilled, dazzled, and dazed,  
 Arjuna knelt, and bowed his head,  
 And clasped his palms, and cried, and said:

**ARJUNA:**

Yea! I have seen! I see!  
 Lord! all is wrapped in Thee!  
 The gods are in Thy glorious frame! the creatures  
 Of earth, and heaven, and hell



In Thy Divine form dwell,  
And in Thy countenance show all the features

Of Brahma, sitting lone  
Upon His lotus-throne;  
Of saints and sages, and the serpent races  
Ananta, Vāsuki.  
Yea! mightiest Lord! I see  
Thy thousand thousand arms, and breasts, and faces,

And eyes, — on every side  
Perfect, diversified;  
And nowhere end of Thee, nowhere beginning,  
Nowhere a centre! Shifts  
Wherever soul's gaze lifts  
Thy central Self, all-willing, and all-winning!

Infinite King! I see  
The anadem on Thee,  
The club, the shell, the discus; see Thee burning  
In beams insufferable,  
Lighting earth, heaven, and hell  
With brilliance blinding, glorious, flashing, turning

Darkness to dazzling day,  
Look I whichever way.  
Ah, Lord! I worship Thee, the Undivided,  
The Uttermost of thought,  
The Treasure-Palace wrought  
To hold the wealth of the worlds; the shield provided

To shelter Virtue's laws;  
The Fount whence Life's stream draws  
All waters of all rivers of all being:  
The One Unborn, Unending:  
Unchanging and unblending!  
With might and majesty, past thought, past seeing!

Silver of moon and gold  
Of sun are glances rolled  
From Thy great eyes; Thy visage, beaming tender  
Over the stars and skies,  
Doth to warm life surprise  
Thy Universe. The worlds are filled with wonder

*The Song Celestial*

Of Thy perfections! Space  
 Star-sprinkled, and the place  
 From pole to pole of the heavens, from bound to bound,  
 Hath Thee in every spot,  
 Thee, Thee! — Where Thou art not  
 O Holy, Marvellous Form! is nowhere found!

O Mystic, Awful One!  
 At sight of Thee, made known,  
 The Three Worlds quake; the lower gods draw nigh Thee;  
 They fold their palms, and bow  
 Body, and breast, and brow,  
 And, whispering worship, laud and magnify Thee!

Rishis and Siddhas cry  
 "Hail! Highest Majesty!"  
 From sage and singer breaks the hymn of glory  
 In holy melody,  
 Sounding the praise of Thee,  
 While countless companies take up the story,

Rudras, who ride the storms,  
 Th' Âdityas' shining forms,  
 Vasus and Sâdhyas, Viśwas, Ushmapas,  
 Maruts, and those great Twins,  
 The heavenly, fair Aświns,  
 Gandharvas, Rakshasas, Siddhas, Asuras, —

These see Thee, and revere  
 In silence-stricken fear;  
 Yea! the Worlds — seeing Thee with form stupendous,  
 With faces manifold,  
 With eyes which all behold,  
 Unnumbered eyes, vast arms, members tremendous,

Flanks, lit with sun and star,  
 Feet planted near and far,  
 Tushes of terror, mouths wrathful and tender; —  
 The Three wide Worlds before Thee  
 Adore, as I adore Thee,  
 Quake, as I quake, to witness so much splendor!

I mark Thee strike the skies  
With front in wondrous wise  
Huge, rainbow-painted, glittering; and thy mouth  
Opened, and orbs which see  
All things, whatever be,  
In all Thy worlds, east, west, and north and south.

O Eyes of God! O Head!  
My strength of soul is fled,  
Gone is heart's force, rebuked is mind's desire!  
When I behold Thee so,  
With awful brows a-glow,  
With burning glance, and lips lighted with fire,

Fierce as those flames which shall  
Consume, at close of all,  
Earth, Heaven! Ah me! I see no Earth and Heaven!  
Thee, Lord of Lords! I see,  
Thee only -- only Thee!  
Ah! let Thy mercy unto me be given!

Thou Refuge of the World!  
Lo! to the cavern hurled  
Of Thy wide-opened throat, and lips white-tushed,  
I see our noblest ones,  
Great Dhritarashtra's sons,  
Bhishma, Drona, and Karna, caught and crushed!

The Kings and Chiefs drawn in,  
That gaping gorge within;  
The best of all both armies torn and riven!  
Between Thy jaws they lie  
Mangled fell bloodily,  
Ground into dust and death! Like streams downdriven

With helpless haste, which go  
In headlong furious flow  
Straight to the gulping maw of th' unfilled ocean,  
So to that flaming cave  
These heroes great and brave  
Pour, in unending streams, with helpless motion!

Like moths which in the night  
Flutter towards a light,  
Drawn to their fiery doom, flying and dying,  
So to their death still throng,  
Blind, dazzled, borne along  
Ceaselessly, all these multitudes, wild flying!

Thou, that hast fashioned men,  
Devourest them agen,  
One with another, great and small, alike!  
The creatures whom Thou mak'st,  
With flaming jaws Thou tak'st,  
Lapping them up! Lord God! Thy terrors strike

From end to end of earth,  
Filling life full, from birth  
To death, with deadly, burning, lurid dread!  
Ah, Vishnu! make me know  
Why is Thy visage so?  
Who art Thou, feasting thus upon Thy dead?

Who? awful Deity!  
I bow myself to Thee,  
*Nâmostu Tê Devavara! Prasîd!*<sup>1</sup>  
O Mightiest Lord! rehearse  
Why hast Thou face so fierce?  
Whence did this aspect horrible proceed?

KRISHNA:

Thou seest Me as Time who kills, Time who brings all to doom,  
The Slayer Time, Ancient of Days, come hither to consume;  
Excepting thee, of all these hosts of hostile chiefs arrayed,  
There shines not one shall leave alive the battlefield! Dismayed  
No longer be! Arise! obtain renown! destroy thy foes!  
Fight for the kingdom waiting thee when thou hast vanquished those.  
By Me they fall — not thee! the stroke of death is dealt them now,  
Even as they stand thus gallantly; My instrument art thou!  
Strike, strong-armed Prince! at Drona! at Bhishma strike! deal death  
To Karna, Jayadratha; stay all this warlike breath!  
'Tis I who bid them perish! Thou wilt but slay the slain.  
Fight! they must fall, and thou must live, victor upon this plain!

<sup>1</sup> "Hail to Thee, God of Gods! Be favorable!"

**SANJAYA:**

Hearing mighty Keshav's word,  
 Tremblingly that helmèd Lord  
 Clasped his lifted palms, and — praying  
 Grace of Krishna — stood there, saying,  
 With bowed brow and accents broken,  
 These words, timorously spoken:

**ARJUNA:**

Worthily, Lord of Might!  
 The whole world hath delight  
 In Thy surpassing power, obeying Thee;  
 The Rakshasas, in dread  
 At sight of Thee, are sped  
 To all four quarters; and the company  
  
 Of Siddhas sound Thy name.  
 How should they not proclaim  
 Thy Majesties, Divinest, Mightiest?  
 Thou Brahm, than Brahma greater!  
 Thou Infinite Creator!  
 Thou God of gods, Life's Dwelling-place and Rest!

Thou, of all souls the Soul!  
 The Comprehending Whole!  
 Of Being formed, and formless Being the Framer;  
 O Utmost One! O Lord!  
 Older than eld, Who stored  
 The worlds with wealth of life. O Treasure-claimer

Who wottest all, and art  
 Wisdom Thyself! O Part  
 In all, and all, for all from Thee have risen!  
 Numberless now I see  
 The aspects are of Thee!  
 Vayu <sup>1</sup> Thou art, and He who keeps the prison

Of Narak, Yama dark,  
 And Agni's shining spark.  
 Varuna's waves are Thy waves. Moon and starlight

<sup>1</sup> The wind.

*The Song Celestial*

Are Thine! Prajâpati  
 Art Thou, and 'tis to Thee  
 Men kneel in worshipping the old world's far light,

The first of mortal men.  
 Again, Thou God! again  
 A thousand thousand times be magnified!  
 Honor and worship be —  
 Glory and praise, — to Thee  
*Namô, Namastê*, cried on every side.

Cried here, above, below,  
 Uttered when Thou dost go,  
 Uttered when Thou dost come! *Namô!* we call.  
*Namôstu!* God adored!  
*Namôstu!* Nameless Lord!  
 Hail to Thee! Praise to Thee! Thou One in all.

For Thou art All! Yea, Thou!  
 Ah! if in anger now  
 Thou shouldst remember I did think Thee Friend,  
 Speaking with easy speech,  
 As men use each to each;  
 Did call Thee "Krishna," "Prince," nor comprehend

Thy hidden majesty,  
 The might, the awe of Thee;  
 Did, in my heedlessness, or in my love,  
 On journey, or in jest,  
 Or when we lay at rest,  
 Sitting at council, straying in the grove,

Alone, or in the throng,  
 Do Thee, most Holy! wrong,  
 Be Thy grace granted for that witless sin!  
 For Thou art, now I know,  
 Father of all below,  
 Of all above, of all the worlds within,

Guru of Gurus, more  
 To reverence and adore  
 Than all which is adorable and high!

How, in the wide worlds three  
Should any equal be?  
Shall any other share Thy majesty?

Therefore, with body bent  
And reverent intent,  
I praise, and serve, and seek Thee, asking grace.  
As father to a son,  
As friend to friend, as one  
Who loveth to his lover, turn Thy face

In gentleness on me!  
Good is it I did see  
This unknown marvel of Thy Form! But fear  
Mingles with joy! Retake,  
Dear Lord! for pity's sake  
Thine earthly shape, which earthly eyes may bear!

Be merciful, and show  
The visage that I know;  
Let me regard Thee, as of yore, arrayed  
With disc and forehead-gem,  
With mace and anadem,  
Thou who sustainest all things! Undismayed

Let me once more behold  
The form I loved of old,  
Thou of the thousand arms and countless eyes!  
My frightened heart is fain  
To see restored again  
The Charioteer, my Krishna's kind disguise.

KRISHNA:

Yea! thou hast seen, Arjuna! because I loved thee well,  
The secret countenance of Me, revealed by mystic spell,  
Shining, and wonderful, and vast, majestic, manifold,  
Which none save thou in all the years had favor to behold;  
For not by Vedas cometh this, nor sacrifice, nor alms,  
Nor works well-done, nor penance long, nor prayers, nor chaunted psalms,  
That mortal eyes should bear to view the Immortal Soul unclad,  
Prince of the Kurus! This was kept for thee alone! Be glad!

Let no more trouble shake thy heart because thine eyes have seen  
 My terror with My glory. As I before have been  
 So will I be again for thee; with lightened heart behold!  
 Once more I am thy Krishna, the form thou knew'st of old!

SANJAYA:

These words to Arjuna spake  
 Vāsudev, and straight did take  
 Back again the semblance dear  
 Of the well-loved chariotceer;  
 Peace and joy it did restore  
 When the Prince beheld once more  
 Mighty BRAHMA'S form and face  
 Clothed in Krishna's gentle grace.

ARJUNA:

Now that I see come back, Janardana!  
 This friendly human frame, my mind can think  
 Calm thoughts once more; my heart beats still again!\*

KRISHNA:

Yea! it was wonderful and terrible  
 To view me as thou didst, dear Prince! The gods  
 Dread and desire continually to view!  
 Yet not by Vedas, nor from sacrifice,  
 Nor penance, nor gift-giving, nor with prayer  
 Shall any so behold, as thou hast seen!  
 Only by fullest service, perfect faith,  
 And uttermost surrender am I known  
 And seen, and entered into, Indian Prince!  
 Who doeth all for Me; who findeth Me  
 In all; adoreth always; loveth all  
 Which I have made, and Me, for Love's sole end,  
 That man, Arjuna! unto Me doth wend.

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER XI. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

*Entitled "Viśwarupdarśanam,"*

*Or "The Book of the Manifesting of the One and Manifested."*



## CHAPTER XII

**ARJUNA:**

Lord! of the men who serve Thee — true in heart —  
As God revealed; and of the men who serve,  
Worshipping Thee Unrevealed, Unbodied, far,  
Which take the better way of faith and life?

**KRISHNA:**

Whoever serve Me — as I show Myself —  
Constantly true, in full devotion fixed,  
These hold I very holy. But who serve —  
Worshipping Me The One, The Invisible,  
The Unrevealed, Unnamed, Unthinkable,  
Uttermost, All-pervading, Highest, Sure —  
Who thus adore Me, mastering their sense,  
Of one set mind to all, glad in all good,  
These blessed souls come unto Me.

Yet, hard

The travail is for whoso bend their minds  
To reach th' Unmanifest. That viewless path  
Shall scarce be trod by man bearing his flesh!  
But whereso any doeth all his deeds,  
Renouncing self in Me, full of Me, fixed  
To serve only the Highest, night and day  
Musing on Me — him will I swiftly lift  
Forth from life's ocean of distress and death  
Whose soul clings fast to Me. Cling thou to Me!  
Clasp Me with heart and mind! so shalt thou dwell  
Surely with Me on high. But if thy thought  
Droops from such height; if thou be'st weak to set  
Body and soul upon Me constantly,  
Despair not! give Me lower service! seek  
To read Me, worshipping with steadfast will;  
And, if thou canst not worship steadfastly,  
Work for Me, toil in works pleasing to Me!  
For he that laboreth right for love of Me  
Shall finally attain! But, if in this  
Thy faint heart fails, bring Me thy failure! find

Refuge in Me! let fruits of labor go,  
 Renouncing all for me, with lowliest heart,  
 So shalt thou come; for, though to know is more  
 Than diligence, yet worship better is  
 Than knowing, and renouncing better still.  
 Near to renunciation — very near —  
 Dwelleth Eternal Peace!

Who hateth nought

Of all which lives, living himself benign,  
 Compassionate, from arrogance exempt,  
 Exempt from love of self, unchangeable  
 By good or ill; patient, contented, firm  
 In faith, mastering himself, true to his word,  
 Seeking Me, heart and soul; vowed unto Me, —  
 That man I love! Who troubleth not his kind,  
 And is not troubled by them; clear of wrath,  
 Living too high for gladness, grief, or fear,  
 That man I love! Who, dwelling quiet-eyed,<sup>1</sup>  
 Stainless, serene, well-balanced, unperplexed,  
 Working with Me, yet from all works detached,  
 That man I love! Who, fixed in faith on Me,  
 Dotes upon none, scorns none; rejoiceth not,  
 And grieves not, letting good and evil hap  
 Light when it will, and when it will depart,  
 That man I love! Who, unto friend and foe  
 Keeping an equal heart, with equal mind  
 Bears shame and glory, with an equal peace  
 Takes heat and cold, pleasure and pain; abides  
 Quit of desires, hears praise or calumny  
 In passionless restraint, unmoved by each,  
 Linked by no ties to earth, steadfast in Me,  
 That man I love! But most of all I love  
 Those happy ones to whom 'tis life to live  
 In single fervid faith and love unseeing,  
 Eating the blessed Amrit of my Being!

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER XII. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

*Entitled "Bhaktiyôgô,"*

*Or "The Book of the Religion of Faith."*

<sup>1</sup> "Not peering about," — *anapeksha*.

## CHAPTER XIII

ARJUNA:

Now would I hear, O gracious Keśava! <sup>1</sup>  
Of Life which seems, and Soul beyond, which sees,  
And what it is we know — or seem to know.

KRISHNA:

Yea! Son of Kunti! for this flesh ye see  
Is *Kshetra*, is the field where Life disports;  
And that which views and knows it is the Soul,  
*Kshetrajna*. In all "fields," thou Indian prince!  
I am *Kshetrajna*. I am what surveys!  
Only that knowledge knows which knows the known  
By the knower! <sup>2</sup> What it is, that "field" of life,  
What qualities it hath, and whence it is,  
And why it changeth, and the faculty  
That wotteth it, the mightiness of this,  
And how it wotteth — hear these things from Me!

. . . . . <sup>3</sup>

The elements, the conscious life, the mind,  
The unseen vital force, the nine great gates  
Of the body, or the five domains of sense,  
Desire, dislike, pleasure and pain, and thought  
Deep-woven, and persistency of being;  
These all are wrought on matter by the Soul!

Humbleness, truthfulness, and harmlessness,  
Patience and honor, reverence for the wise,  
Purity, constancy, control of self,  
Contempt of sense-delights, self-sacrifice,  
Perception of the certitude of ill  
In birth, death, age, disease, suffering, and sin;

<sup>1</sup> The Calcutta edition of the Mahābhārata has these opening lines.

<sup>2</sup> This is the nearest possible version of  
*Kshetrakshetrajnayorjñānān yat tajjñānam mān mama.*

<sup>3</sup> I omit two lines of the Sanskrit here, evidently interpolated by some Vedantist.

Detachment, lightly holding unto home,  
 Children, and wife, and all that bindeth men;  
 An ever-tranquil heart in fortunes good  
 And fortunes evil, with a will set firm  
 To worship Me — Me only! ceasing not;  
 Loving all solitudes, and shunning noise  
 Of foolish crowds; endeavors resolute  
 To reach perception of the Utmost Soul,  
 And grace to understand what gain it were  
 So to attain, — this is true Wisdom, Prince!  
 And what is otherwise is ignorance!

Now will I speak of knowledge best to know —  
 That Truth which giveth man Amrit to drink,  
 The Truth of HIM, the Para-Brahm, the All,  
 The Uncreated; not *Asat*, not *Sat*,  
 Not Form, nor the Unformed; yet both, and more; —  
 Whose hands are everywhere, and everywhere  
 Planted His feet, and everywhere His eyes  
 Beholding, and His ears in every place  
 Hearing, and all His faces everywhere  
 Enlightening and encompassing His worlds.  
 Glorified by the senses He hath given,  
 Yet beyond sense He is; sustaining all,  
 He dwelleth unattached: of forms and modes  
 Master, yet neither form nor mode hath He;  
 He is within all beings — and without —  
 Motionless, yet still moving; not discerned  
 For subtlety of instant presence; close  
 To all, to each, yet measurelessly far!  
 Not manifold, and yet subsisting still  
 In all which lives; for ever to be known  
 As the Sustainer, yet, at the End of Times,  
 He maketh all to end — and re-creates.  
 The Light of Lights He is, in the heart of the Dark  
 Shining eternally. Wisdom He is  
 And Wisdom's way, and Guide of all the wise,  
 Planted in every heart.

So have I told  
 Of Life's stuff, and the moulding, and the lore  
 To comprehend. Whoso, adoring Me,  
 Perceiveth this, shall surely come to Me!

Know thou that Nature and the Spirit both  
Have no beginning! Know that qualities  
And changes of them are by Nature wrought;  
That Nature puts to work the acting frame,  
But Spirit doth inform it, and so cause  
Feeling of pain and pleasure. Spirit, linked  
To moulded matter, entereth into bond  
With qualities by Nature framed, and, thus  
Married to matter, breeds the birth again  
In good or evil *yonis*.<sup>1</sup>

Yet is this —

Yea! in its bodily prison! — Spirit pure,  
Spirit supreme; surveying, governing,  
Guarding, possessing; Lord and Master still  
PURUSHA, Ultimate, One Soul with Me.

Whoso thus knows himself, and knows his sou  
PURUSHA, working through the qualities  
With Nature's modes, the light hath come for him!  
Whatever flesh he bears, never again  
Shall he take on its load. Some few there be  
By meditation find the Soul in Self  
Self-schooled; and some by long philosophy  
And holy life reach thither; some by works.  
Some, never so attaining, hear of light  
From other lips, and seize, and cleave to it  
Worshipping; yea! and those — to teaching true —  
Overpass Death!

Wherever, Indian Prince!

Life is — of moving things, or things unmoved,  
Plant or still seed — know, what is there hath grown  
By bond of Matter and of Spirit: Know  
He sees indeed who sees in all alike  
The living, lordly Soul; the Soul Supreme,  
Imperishable amid the Perishing:  
For, whoso thus beholds, in every place,  
In every form, the same, one, Living Lord,  
Doth no more wrongfulness unto himself,  
But goes the highest road which brings to bliss.)  
Seeing, he sees, indeed, who sees that works

<sup>1</sup> Wombs.

Are Nature's wont, for Soul to use, not love,  
 Acting, yet not the actor; sees the mass  
 Of separate living things — each of its kind —  
 Issue from One, and blend again to One:  
 Then hath he BRAHMA, he attains!

O Prince!

That Ultimate, High Spirit, Uncreate,  
 Unqualified, even when it entereth flesh  
 Taketh no stain of acts, worketh in nought!  
 Like to th' ethereal air, pervading all,  
 Which, for sheer subtlety, avoideth taint,  
 The subtle Soul sits everywhere, unstained:  
 Like to the light of the all-piercing sun  
 [Which is not changed by aught it shines upon,]  
 The Soul's light shineth pure in every place;  
 And they who, by such eye of wisdom see  
 How matter, and what deals with it, divide;  
 And how the Spirit and the flesh have strife,  
 These wise ones go the way which leads to Life!

HERE ENDS CHAPTER XIII. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ.

*Entitled "Kshetrakshetrajnavibhāgayôgô,"*

*Or "The Book of Religion by Separation of Matter and Spirit."*

## CHAPTER XIV

**KRISHNA:**

Yet farther will I open unto thee  
This wisdom of all wisdoms, uttermost,  
The which possessing, all My saints have passed  
To perfectness. On these high verities  
Reliant, rising into fellowship  
With Me, they are not born again at birth  
Of *Kalpas*, nor at *Pralyas* suffer change!

This Universe the Womb is where I plant  
Seed of all lives! Thence, Prince of India, comes  
Birth to all beings! Whoso, Kunti's Son!  
Mothers each mortal form, Brahma conceives,  
And I am He that fathers, sending seed!

*Sattwan*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*, so are named,  
The qualities of Nature, "Soothfastness,"  
"Passion," and "Ignorance." These three bind down  
The changeless Spirit in the changeful flesh.  
Whereof sweet "Soothfastness" — by purity  
Living unsullied and enlightened — binds  
The sinless Soul to happiness and truth;  
And Passion, being kin to appetite,  
And breeding impulse and propensity,  
Binds the embodied Soul, O Kunti's Son!  
By tie of works. But Ignorance, the child  
Of Darkness, blinding mortal men, binds down  
Their souls to stupor, sloth, and drowsiness.  
Yea, Prince of India! Soothfastness binds souls  
In pleasant wise to flesh; and Passion binds  
By toilsome strain; but Ignorance, which blots  
The beams of wisdom, binds the soul to sloth.  
Passion and Ignorance, once overcome,  
Leave Soothfastness, O Bharata! Where this  
With Ignorance are absent, Passion rules;  
And Ignorance in hearts not good nor quick.  
When at all gateways of the Body shines

The Lamp of Knowledge, then may one see well  
 Soothfastness settled in that city reigns;  
 Where longing is, and ardor, and unrest,  
 Impulse to strive and gain, and avarice,  
 Those spring from Passion — Prince! — engrained; and where  
 Darkness and dulness, sloth and stupor are,  
 'Tis Ignorance hath caused them, Kuru Chief!

Moreover, when a soul departeth, fixed  
 In Soothfastness, it goeth to the place --  
 Perfect and pure — of those that know all Truth.  
 If it departeth in set hebetude  
 Of impulse, it shall go into the world  
 Of spirits tied to works; and, if it dies  
 In hardened Ignorance, that blinded soul  
 Is born anew in some unlighted womb.

The fruit of Soothfastness is true and sweet;  
 The fruit of lusts is pain and toil; the fruit  
 Of Ignorance is deeper darkness. Yea!  
 For Light brings light, and Passion ache to have.  
 Blindness, bewilderments, and ignorance  
 Grow forth from Ignorance. Those of the first  
 Rise ever higher; those of the second mode  
 Take a mid place; the darkened souls sink back  
 To lower deeps, loaded with witlessness!

When, watching life, the living man perceives  
 The only actors are the Qualities,  
 And knows what lives beyond the Qualities,  
 Then is he come nigh unto Me!

The Soul,

Thus passing forth from the Three Qualities --  
 Whereof arise all bodies — overcomes  
 Birth, Death, Sorrow, and Age; and drinketh deep  
 The undying wine of Amrit.

ARJUNA:

Oh, my Lord!

Which be the signs to know him that hath gone  
 Past the Three Modes? How liveth he? What way  
 Leadeth him safe beyond the threefold modes?



KRISHNA:

He who with equanimity surveys  
 Lustre of goodness, strife of passion, sloth  
 Of ignorance, not angry if they are,  
 Not angry when they are not: he who sits  
 A sojourner and stranger in their midst  
 Unruffled, standing off, saying — serene —  
 When troubles break, “These are the Qualities!”  
 He unto whom — self-centered — grief and joy  
 Sound as one word; to whose deep-seeing eyes  
 The clod, the marble, and the gold are one;  
 Whose equal heart holds the same gentleness  
 For lovely and unlovely things, firm-set,  
 Well-pleased in praise and dispraise; satisfied  
 With honor or dishonor; unto friends  
 And unto foes alike in tolerance,  
 Detached from undertakings, — he is named  
 Surmounter of the Qualities!

And such —  
 With single, fervent faith adoring Me,  
 Passing beyond the Qualities, conforms  
 To Brahma, and attains Me!

For I am  
 That whereof Brahma is the likeness! Mine  
 The Amrit is; and Immortality  
 Is mine; and mine perfect Felicity!

HERE ENDS CHAPTER XIV. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

*Entitled “Gunatrayavibhāgayôgô,”*

*Or “The Book of Religion by Separation from the Qualities.”*

## CHAPTER XV

**KRISHNA:**

Men call the Aśwattha, — the Banyan-tree, —  
Which hath its boughs beneath, its roots on high, --  
The ever-holy tree. Yea! for its leaves  
Are green and waving hymns which whisper Truth!  
Who knoweth well the Aśwattha, knows all.

Its branches shoot to heaven and sink to earth.<sup>1</sup>  
Even as the deeds of men, which take their birth  
From qualities: its silver sprays and blooms,  
And all the eager verdure of its girth,

Leap to quick life at touch of sun and air,  
As men's lives quicken to the temptings fair  
Of wooing sense: its hanging rootlets seek  
The soil beneath, helping to hold it there,

As actions wrought amid this world of men  
Bind them by ever-tightening bonds again.  
If ye knew well the teaching of the Tree,  
What its shape saith; and whence it springs; and, then

How it must end, and all the ills of it,  
The axe of sharp Detachment ye would whet,  
And cleave the clinging snaky roots, and lay  
This Aśwattha of sense-life low, --- to set

New growths upspringing to that happier sky, --  
Which they who reach shall have no day to die,  
Nor fade away, nor fall — to Him, I mean,  
FATHER and FIRST, Who made the mysterv

Of old Creation; for to Him come they  
From passion and from dreams who break away;  
Who part the bonds constraining them to flesh,  
And, -- Him, the Highest, worshipping alway --

<sup>1</sup> I do not consider these verses — which are somewhat freely rendered here — “an attack on the authority of the Vedas,” but a beautiful lyrical episode; a new “Parable of the fig-tree.”

No longer grow at mercy of what breeze  
Of summer pleasure stirs the sleeping trees,  
What blast of tempest tears them, bough and stem.  
To the eternal world pass such as these!

Another Sun gleams there! another Moon!  
Another Light, — a Light which none shall lack  
Whose eyes once see; for those return no more.  
They have attained My Uttermost Abode!

When, in this world of manifested life,  
The undying Spirit, setting forth from Me,  
Taketh on form, it draweth to itself  
From Being's storehouse, — which containeth all, —  
Senses and intellect. The Sovereign Soul  
Thus entering the flesh, or quitting it,  
Gathers these up, as the wind gathers scents,  
Blowing above the flower-banks. Ear and Eye,  
And Touch and Taste, and Smelling, these it takes, —  
Yea, and a sentient mind; — linking itself  
To sense-things so.

The unenlightened ones  
Mark not that Spirit when he goes or comes,  
Nor when he takes his pleasure in the form,  
Conjoined with qualities; but those see plain  
Who have the eyes to see. Holy souls see  
Which strive thereto. Enlightened, they behold  
That Spirit in themselves; but foolish ones,  
Even though they strive, discern not, having hearts  
Unkindled, ill-informed!

Know, too, from Me  
Shineth the gathered glory of the sun  
Which lightens all the world: from Me the moon  
Draws silvery beams, and fire fierce loveliness.  
I penetrate the clay, and lend all shapes  
Their living force; I glide into the plant —  
Its root, leaf, bloom — to make the woodland green  
With springing sap. Becoming vital warmth,

I glow in glad, respiring frames, and pass  
With outward and with inward breath to feed  
The body with all meats.<sup>1</sup>

For in this world  
Being is twofold: the Divided, one;  
The Undivided, one. All things that live  
Are "the Divided." That which sits apart,  
"The Undivided."

Higher still is ONE,  
The Highest, holding all, whose Name is LORD,  
The Eternal, Sovereign, First! Who fills all worlds,  
Sustaining them. And — dwelling thus beyond  
Divided Life and Undivided — I  
Am called of men and Vedas, God Supreme,  
The PURUSHOTTAMA.

Who knows Me thus,  
With mind unclouded, knoweth all, dear Prince!  
And with his whole soul ever worshipping Me.

Now is the sacred, secret Mystery  
Declared to thee! Who comprehendeth this  
Hath wisdom! He is quit of works in bliss!

HERE ENDS CHAPTER XV. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

*Entitled "Purushottamaprapñyôgô,"*

*Or "The Book of Religion by attaining the Supreme."*

<sup>1</sup> I omit a verse here, evidently interpolated.

## CHAPTER XVI

**KRISHNA:**

Fearlessness, singleness of soul, the will  
Always to strive for wisdom; opened hand  
And governed appetites; and piety  
And love of lonely study; humbleness,  
Uprightness, heed to injure nought which lives,  
Truthfulness, slowness unto wrath, a mind  
That lightly letteth go what others prize;  
And equanimity, and charity  
Which spieth no man's faults; and tenderness  
Towards all that suffer; a contented heart,  
Fluttered by no desires; a bearing mild,  
Modest, and grave, with manhood nobly mixed  
With patience, fortitude, and purity;  
An unvengeful spirit, never given  
To rate itself too high; — such be the signs,  
O Indian Prince! of him whose feet are set  
On that fair path which leads to heavenly birth!

Deceitfulness, and arrogance, and pride,  
Quickness to anger, harsh and evil speech,  
And ignorance, to its own darkness blind, —  
These be the signs, My Prince! of him whose birth  
Is fated for the regions of the vile.<sup>1</sup>

The Heavenly Birth brings to deliverance,  
So should'st thou know! The birth with Asuras  
Brings into bondage. Be thou joyous, Prince  
Whose lot is set apart for heavenly Birth.

Two stamps there are marked on all living men,  
Divine and Undivine; I spake to thee  
By what marks thou shouldst know the Heavenly Man,  
Hear from me now of the Unheavenly!

<sup>1</sup> "Of the Asuras," lit.

They comprehend not, the Unheavenly,  
 How souls go forth from Me; nor how they come  
 Back unto Me: nor is there Truth in these,  
 Nor purity, nor rule of Life. "This world  
 Hath not a Law, nor Order, nor a Lord,"  
 So say they: "nor hath risen up by Cause  
 Following on Cause, in perfect purposing,  
 But is none other than a House of Lust."  
 And, this thing thinking, all those ruined ones —  
 Of little wit, dark-minded — give themselves  
 To evil deeds, the curses of their kind.  
 Surrendered to desires insatiable,  
 Full of deceitfulness, folly, and pride,  
 In blindness cleaving to their errors, caught  
 Into the sinful course, they trust this lie  
 As it were true — this lie which leads to death —  
 Finding in Pleasure all the good which is,  
 And crying "Here it finisheth!"

#### Ensnared

In nooses of a hundred idle hopes,  
 Slaves to their passion and their wrath, they buy  
 Wealth with base deeds, to glut hot appetites;  
 "Thus much, to-day," they say, "we gained! thereby  
 Such and such wish of heart shall have its fill;  
 And this is ours! and th' other shall be ours!  
 To-day we slew a foe, and we will slay  
 Our other enemy to-morrow! Look!  
 Are we not lords? Make we not goodly cheer?  
 Is not our fortune famous, brave, and great?  
 Rich are we, proudly born! What other men  
 Live like to us? Kill, then, for sacrifice!  
 Cast largesse, and be merry!" So they speak  
 Darkened by ignorance; and so they fall —  
 Tossed to and fro with projects, tricked, and bound  
 In net of black delusion, lost in lusts —  
 Down to foul Naraka. Conceited, fond,  
 Stubborn and proud, dead-drunken with the wine  
 Of wealth, and reckless, all their offerings  
 Have but a show of reverence, being not made  
 In piety of ancient faith. Thus vowed  
 To self-hood, force, insolence, feasting, wrath.

These My blasphemers, in the forms they wear  
 And in the forms they breed, my foemen are,  
 Hateful and hating; cruel, evil, vile,  
 Lowest and least of men, whom I cast down  
 Again, and yet again, at end of lives,  
 Into some devilish womb, whence — birth by birth --  
 The devilish wombs re-spawn them, all beguiled;  
 And, till they find and worship Me, sweet Prince!  
 Tread they that Nether Road.

The Doors of Hell

Are threefold, whereby men to ruin pass, —  
 The door of Lust, the door of Wrath, the door  
 Of Avarice. Let a man shun those three!  
 He who shall turn aside from entering  
 All those three gates of Narak, wendeth straight  
 To find his peace, and comes to Swarga's gate.

. . . . .<sup>1</sup>

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER XVI. OF THE  
 BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

*Entitled "Daivasurasampadwibhāgayōg,"*  
*Or "The Book of the Separateness of the Divine and Undivine."*

<sup>1</sup> I omit the ten concluding shlokas, with Mr. Davies.

## CHAPTER XVII

ARJUNA:

If men forsake the holy ordinance,  
Heedless of Shastras, yet keep faith at heart  
And worship, what shall be the state of those,  
Great Krishna! *Sattwan, Rajas, Tamas?* Say!

KRISHNA:

Threefold the faith is of mankind, and springs  
From those three qualities, — becoming “true,”  
Or “passion-stained,” or “dark,” as thou shalt hear!

The faith of each believer, Indian Prince!  
Conforms itself to what he truly is.  
Where thou shalt see a worshipper, that one  
To what he worships lives assimilate,  
[Such as the shrine, so is the votary,]  
The “soothfast” souls adore true gods; the souls  
Obeying *Rajas* worship Rakshasas<sup>1</sup>  
Or Yakshas; and the men of Darkness pray  
To Pretas and to Bhutas.<sup>2</sup> Yea, and those  
Who practise bitter penance, not enjoined  
By rightful rule — penance which hath its root  
In self-sufficient, proud hypocrisies —  
Those men, passion-beset, violent, wild,  
Torturing — the witless ones — My elements  
Shut in fair company within their flesh,  
(Nay, Me myself, present within the flesh!)  
Know them to devils devoted, not to Heaven!  
For like as foods are threefold for mankind  
In nourishing, so is there threefold way  
Of worship, abstinence, and almsgiving!  
Hear this of Me! there is a food which brings  
Force, substance, strength, and health, and joy to live,  
Being well-seasoned, cordial, comforting,

<sup>1</sup> Rakshasas and Yakshas are unembodied but capricious beings of great power, gifts, and beauty, sometimes also of benignity.

<sup>2</sup> These are spirits of evil, wandering ghosts.



The "Soothfast" meat. And there be foods which bring  
Aches and unrests, and burning blood, and grief,  
Being too biting, heating, salt, and sharp,  
And therefore craved by too strong appetite.  
And there is foul food — kept from over-night,<sup>1</sup>  
Savorless, filthy, which the foul will eat,  
A feast of rottenness, meet for the lips  
Of such as love the "Darkness."

Thus with rites; —

A sacrifice not for rewardment made,  
Offered in rightful wise, when he who vows  
Sayeth, with heart devout, "This I should do!"  
Is "Soothfast" rite. But sacrifice for gain,  
Offered for good repute, be sure that this,  
O Best of Bharatas! is Rajas-rite,  
With stamp of "passion." And a sacrifice  
Offered against the laws, with no due dole  
Of food-giving, with no accompaniment  
Of hallowed hymn, nor largesse to the priests,  
In faithless celebration, call it vile,  
The deed of "Darkness!" — lost!

Worship of gods

Meriting worship; lowly reverence  
Of Twice-borns, Teachers, Elders; Purity,  
Rectitude, and the Brahmacharya's vow,  
And not to injure any helpless thing, —  
These make a true religiousness of Act.

Words causing no man woe, words ever true,  
Gentle and pleasing words, and those ye say  
In murmured reading of a Sacred Writ, —  
These make the true religiousness of Speech.

Serenity of soul, benignity,  
Sway of the silent Spirit, constant stress  
To sanctify the Nature, — these things make  
Good rite, and true religiousness of Mind.

<sup>1</sup> *Ydayaman*, food which has remained after the watches of the night. In India this would probably "go bad."

Such threefold faith, in highest piety  
Kept, with no hope of gain, by hearts devote,  
Is perfect work of *Sattwan*, true belief.

Religion shown in act of proud display  
To win good entertainment, worship, fame,  
Such — say I — is of *Rajas*, rash and vain.

Religion followed by a witless will  
To torture self, or come at power to hurt  
Another, — 'tis of *Tamas*, dark and ill.

The gift lovingly given, when one shall say  
“Now must I gladly give!” when he who takes  
Can render nothing back; made in due place,  
Due time, and to a meet recipient,  
Is gift of *Sattwan*, fair and profitable.

The gift selfishly given, where to receive  
Is hoped again, or when some end is sought,  
Or where the gift is proffered with a grudge,  
This is of *Rajas*, stained with impulse, ill.

The gift churlishly flung, at evil time,  
In wrongful place, to base recipient,  
Made in disdain or harsh unkindliness,  
Is gift of *Tamas*, dark; it doth not bless!¹

HERE ENDETH CHAPTER XVII. OF THE

BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ,

*Entitled “Sraddhatrayavibhāgayōg,”*

*Or “The Book of Religion by the Threefold Kinds of Faith.”*

I omit the concluding shlokas, as of very doubtful authenticity.

## CHAPTER XVIII

ARJUNA:

Fain would I better know, Thou Glorious One!  
The very truth — Heart's Lord! — of *Sannyâs*,  
Abstention; and Renunciation, Lord!  
*Tyâga*; and what separates these twain!

KRISHNA:

The poets rightly teach that *Sannyâs*  
Is the foregoing of all acts which spring  
Out of desire; and their wisest say  
*Tyâga* is renouncing fruit of acts.

There be among the saints some who have held  
All action sinful, and to be renounced;  
And some who answer "Nay! the goodly acts —  
As worship, penance, alms — must be performed!"  
Hear now My sentence, Best of Bharatas!

'Tis well set forth, O Chaser of thy Foes!  
Renunciation is of threefold form,  
And Worship, Penance, Alms, not to be stayed;  
Nay, to be gladly done; for all those three  
Are purifying waters for true souls!

Yet must be practised even those high works  
In yielding up attachment, and all fruit  
Produced by works. This is My judgment, Prince!  
This My insuperable and fixed decree!

Abstaining from a work by right prescribed  
Never is meet! So to abstain doth spring  
From "Darkness," and Delusion teacheth it.  
Abstaining from a work grievous to flesh,  
When one saith " 'Tis unpleasing!" this is null!  
Such an one acts from "passion;" nought of gain  
Wins his Renunciation! But, Arjun!

Abstaining from attachment to the work,  
 Abstaining from rewardment in the work,  
 While yet one doeth it full faithfully,  
 Saying, "'Tis right to do!" that is "true" act  
 And abstinence! Who doeth duties so,  
 Unvexed if his work fail, if it succeed  
 Unflattered, in his own heart justified,  
 Quit of debates and doubts, his is "true" act:  
 For, being in the body, none may stand  
 Wholly aloof from act; yet, who abstains  
 From profit of his acts is abstinent.

The fruit of labors, in the lives to come,  
 Is threefold for all men, — Desirable,  
 And Undesirable, and mixed of both;  
 But no fruit is at all where no work was.

Hear from me, Long-armed Lord! the makings five  
 Which go to every act, in Sāṅkhya taught  
 As necessary. First the force; and then  
 The agent; next, the various instruments;  
 Fourth, the especial effort; fifth, the God.  
 What work soever any mortal doth  
 Of body, mind, or speech, evil or good,  
 By these five doth he that. Which being thus,  
 Whoso, for lack of knowledge, seeth himself  
 As the sole actor, knoweth nought at all  
 And seeth nought. Therefore, I say, if one —  
 Holding aloof from self — with unstained mind  
 Should slay all yonder host, being bid to slay,  
 He doth not slay; he is not bound thereby!

Knowledge, the thing known, and the mind which knows,  
 These make the threefold starting-ground of act.  
 The act, the actor, and the instrument,  
 These make the threefold total of the deed.  
 But knowledge, agent, act, are differenced  
 By three dividing qualities. Hear now  
 Which be the qualities dividing them.

There is "true" Knowledge. Learn thou it is this  
 To see one changeless Life in all the Lives,  
 And in the Separate, One Inseparable.

There is imperfect Knowledge: that which sees  
The separate existences apart,  
And, being separated, holds them real.  
There is false Knowledge: that which blindly clings  
To one as if 'twere all, seeking no Cause,  
Deprived of light, narrow, and dull, and "dark."

There is "right" Action: that which — being enjoined —  
Is wrought without attachment, passionlessly,  
For duty, not for love, nor hate, nor gain.  
There is "vain" Action: that which men pursue  
Aching to satisfy desires, impelled  
By sense of self, with all-absorbing stress:  
This is of *Rajas* — passionate and vain.  
There is "dark" Action: when one doth a thing  
Heedless of issues, heedless of the hurt  
Or wrong for others, heedless if he harm  
His own soul — 'tis of *Tamas*, black and bad!

There is the "rightful" doer. He who acts  
Free from self-seeking, humble, resolute,  
Steadfast, in good or evil hap the same,  
Content to do aright — he "truly" acts.  
There is th' "impassioned" doer. He that works  
From impulse, seeking profit, rude and bold  
To overcome, unchastened; slave by turns  
Of sorrow and of joy: of *Rajas* he!  
And there be evil doers; loose of heart,  
Low-minded, stubborn, fraudulent, remiss.  
Dull, slow, despondent — children of the "dark."

Hear, too, of Intellect and Steadfastness  
The threefold separation, Conqueror-Prince!  
How these are set apart by Qualities.

Good is the Intellect which comprehends  
The coming forth and going back of life,  
What must be done, and what must not be done,  
What should be feared, and what should not be feared,  
What binds and what emancipates the soul:  
That is of *Sattwan*, Prince! of "soothfastness."  
Marred is the Intellect which, knowing right

And knowing wrong, and what is well to do  
 And what must not be done, yet understands  
 Nought with firm mind, nor as the calm truth is:  
 This is of *Rajas*, Prince! and "passionate!"  
 Evil is Intellect which, wrapped in gloom,  
 Looks upon wrong as right, and sees all things  
 Contrariwise of Truth. O Pritha's Son!  
 That is of *Tamas*, "dark" and desperate!

Good is the steadfastness whereby a man  
 Masters his beats of heart, his very breath  
 Of life, the action of his senses; fixed  
 In never-shaken faith and piety:  
 That is of *Sattwan*, Prince! "soothfast" and fair!  
 Stained is the steadfastness whereby a man  
 Holds to his duty, purpose, effort, end,  
 For life's sake, and the love of goods to gain,  
 Arjuna! 'tis of *Rajas*, passion-stamped!  
 Sad is the steadfastness wherewith the fool  
 Cleaves to his sloth, his sorrow, and his fears,  
 His folly and despair. This — Pritha's Son! —  
 Is born of *Tamas*, "dark" and miserable!

Hear further, Chief of Bharatas! from Me  
 The threefold kinds of Pleasure which there be.

Good Pleasure is the pleasure that endures,  
 Banishing pain for aye; bitter at first  
 As poison to the soul, but afterward  
 Sweet as the taste of Amrit. Drink of that!  
 It springeth in the Spirit's deep content.  
 And painful Pleasure springeth from the bond  
 Between the senses and the sense-world. Sweet  
 As Amrit is its first taste, but its last  
 Bitter as poison. 'Tis of *Rajas*, Prince!  
 And foul and "dark" the Pleasure is which springs  
 From sloth and sin and foolishness; at first  
 And at the last, and all the way of life  
 The soul bewildering. 'Tis of *Tamas*, Prince!

For nothing lives on earth, nor 'midst the gods  
 In utmost heaven, but hath its being bound  
 With these three Qualities, by Nature framed.

The work of Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaiśyas,  
And Śudras, O thou Slayer of thy Foes!  
Is fixed by reason of the Qualities  
Planted in each:

A Brahman's virtues, Prince!  
Born of his nature, are serenity,  
Self-mastery, religion, purity,  
Patience, uprightness, learning, and to know  
The truth of things which be. A Kshatriya's pride,  
Born of his nature, lives in valor, fire,  
Constancy, skilfulness, spirit in fight,  
And open-handedness and noble mien,  
As of a lord of men. A Vaiśya's task,  
Born with his nature, is to till the ground,  
Tend cattle, venture trade. A Śudra's state,  
Suiting his nature, is to minister.

Whoso performeth — diligent, content —  
The work allotted him, whate'er it be,  
Lays hold of perfectness! Hear how a man  
Findeth perfection, being so content:  
He findeth it through worship — wrought by work —  
Of HIM that is the Source of all which lives,  
Of HIM by Whom the universe was stretched.

Better thine own work is, though done with fault,  
Than doing others' work, ev'n excellently.  
He shall not fall in sin who fronts the task  
Set him by Nature's hand! Let no man leave  
His natural duty, Prince! though it bear blame!  
For every work hath blame, as every flame  
Is wrapped in smoke! Only that man attains  
Perfect surcease of work whose work was wrought  
With mind unfettered, soul wholly subdued,  
Desires for ever dead, results renounced.

Learn from me, Son of Kunti! also this,  
How one, attaining perfect peace, attains  
BRAHM, the supreme, the highest height of all!

Devoted — with a heart grown pure, restrained  
In lordly self-control, foregoing wiles

Of song and senses, freed from love and hate,  
 Dwelling 'mid solitudes, in diet spare,  
 With body, speech, and will tamed to obey,  
 Ever to holy meditation vowed,  
 From passions liberate, quit of the Self,  
 Of arrogance, impatience, anger, pride;  
 Freed from surroundings, quiet, lacking nought —  
 Such an one grows to oneness with the BRAHM;  
 Such an one, growing one with BRAHM, serene,  
 Sorrows no more, desires no more; his soul,  
 Equally loving all that lives, loves well  
 Me, Who have made them, and attains to Me.  
 By this same love and worship doth he know  
 Me as I am, how high and wonderful,  
 And knowing, straightway enters into Me.  
 And whatsoever deeds he doeth — fixed  
 In Me, as in his refuge — he hath won  
 For ever and for ever by My grace  
 Th' Eternal Rest! So win thou! In thy thoughts  
 Do all thou dost for Me! Renounce for Me!  
 Sacrifice heart and mind and will to Me!  
 Live in the faith of Me! In faith of Me  
 All dangers thou shalt vanquish, by My grace,  
 But, trusting to thyself and heeding not,  
 Thou can'st but perish! If this day thou say'st  
 Relying on thyself, "I will not fight!"  
 Vain will the purpose prove! thy qualities  
 Would spur thee to the war. What thou dost shun,  
 Misled by fair illusions, thou wouldst seek  
 Against thy will, when the task comes to thee  
 Waking the promptings in thy nature set.  
 There lives a Master in the hearts of men  
 Maketh their deeds, by subtle pulling-strings,  
 Dance to what tune HE will. With all thy soul  
 Trust Him, and take Him for thy succor, Prince!  
 So — only so, Arjuna! — shalt thou gain ---  
 By grace of Him — the uttermost repose,  
 The Eternal Place!

. Thus hath been opened thee  
 This Truth of Truths, the Mystery more hid  
 Than any secret mystery. Meditate!  
 And — as thou wilt — then act!



Nay! but once more

Take My last word, My utmost meaning have!  
Precious thou art to Me; right well-beloved!  
Listen! I tell thee for thy comfort this.  
Give Me thy heart! adore Me! serve Me! cling  
In faith and love and reverence to Me!  
So shalt thou come to Me! I promise true,  
For thou art sweet to Me!

And let go those —

Rites and writ duties! Fly to Me alone!  
Make Me thy single refuge! I will free  
Thy soul from all its sins! Be of good cheer!

[Hide, the holy Krishna saith,  
This from him that hath no faith,  
Him that worships not, nor seeks  
Wisdom's teaching when she speaks:  
Hide it from all men who mock;  
But, wherever, 'mid the flock  
Of My lovers, one shall teach  
This divinest, wisest, speech —  
Teaching in the faith to bring  
Truth to them, and offering  
Of all honor unto Me —  
Unto Brahma cometh he!  
Nay, and nowhere shall ye find  
Any man of all mankind  
Doing dearer deed for Me;  
Nor shall any dearer be  
In My earth. Yea, furthermore,  
Whoso reads this converse o'er  
Held by Us upon the plain,  
Pondering piously and fain,  
He hath paid Me sacrifice!  
(Krishna speaketh in this wise!)  
Yea, and whoso, full of faith,  
Heareth wisely what it saith,  
Heareth meckly, — when he dies,  
Surely shall his spirit rise  
To those regions where the Blest,  
Free of flesh, in joyance rest.]

Hath this been heard by thee, O Indian Prince!  
 With mind intent? hath all the ignorance —  
 Which bred thy trouble — vanished, My Arjun?

ARJUNA:

Trouble and ignorance are gone! the Light  
 Hath come unto me, by Thy favor, Lord!  
 Now am I fixed! my doubt is fled away!  
 According to Thy word, so will I do!

SANJAYA:

Thus gathered I the gracious speech of Krishna, O my King!  
 Thus have I told, with heart a-thrill, this wise and wondrous thing  
 By great Vyâsa's learning writ, how Krishna's self made known  
 The Yôga, being Yôga's Lord. So is the high truth shown!  
 And aye, when I remember, O Lord my King, again  
 Arjuna and the God in talk, and all this holy strain,  
 Great is my gladness: when I muse that splendor, passing speech,  
 Of Hari, visible and plain, there is no tongue to reach  
 My marvel and my love and bliss. O Archer-Prince! all hail!  
 O Krishna, Lord of Yôga! surely there shall not fail  
 Blessing, and victory, and power, for Thy most mighty sake,  
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HERE ENDS, WITH CHAPTER XVIII.,

*Entitled "Mokshasanyâsayôg,"*

*Or "The Book of Religion by Deliverance and Renunciation,"*

THE BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ.

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